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BRET HARTE

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There . . . stood her father's name

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The Writings of Bret Harte

STANDARD LIBRARY EDITION

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

THE ANCESTORS OF PETER ATHERLY

AND OTHER TALES

BY

BRET HARTE

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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THE ANCESTORS OF PETER ATHERLY AND OTHER TALES

THE ANCESTORS OF PETER ATHERLY

CHAPTER I

It must be admitted that the civilizing processes of Rough and Ready were not marked by any of the ameliorating conditions of other improved camps. After the discovery of the famous "Eureka" lead, there was the usual influx of gamblers and saloon-keepers; but that was accepted as a matter of course. But it was thought hard that, after a church was built and a new school erected, it should suddenly be found necessary to have doors that locked, instead of standing shamelessly open to the criticism and temptation of wayfarers, or that portable property could no longer be left out at night in the old fond reliance on universal brotherhood. The habit of borrowing was stopped with the introduction of more money into the camp, and the establishment of rates of interest; the poorer people either took what they wanted, or as indiscreetly bought on credit. There were better clothes to be seen in its one long, straggling street, but those who wore them generally lacked the grim virtue of the old pioneers, and the fairer faces that were to be seen were generally rouged. There was a year or two of this kind of mutation, in which the youthful barbarism of Rough and Ready might have been said to struggle with adult civilized wickedness, and then the name itself disappeared. By an Act of the Legis-

lature the growing town was called "Atherly," after the owner of the Eureka mine, — Peter Atherly, — who had given largess to the town in its "Waterworks" and a "Gin Mill," as the new Atherly Hotel and its gilded bar-rooms were now called. Even at the last moment, however, the new title of "Atherly" hung in the balance. The romantic daughter of the pastor had said that Mr. Atherly should be called "Atherly of Atherly," an aristocratic title so strongly suggestive of an innovation upon democratic principles that it was not until it was discreetly suggested that everybody was still free to call him "Atherly, late of Rough and Ready," that opposition ceased.

Possibly this incident may have first awakened him to the value of his name, and some anxiety as to its origin. Roughly speaking, Atherly's father was only a bucolic emigrant from "Mizzouri," and his mother had done the washing for the camp on her first arrival. The Atherlys had suffered on their overland journey from drought and famine, with the addition of being captured by Indians, who had held them captive for ten months. Indeed, Mr. Atherly, senior, never recovered from the effects of his captivity, and died shortly after Mrs. Atherly had given birth to twins, Peter and Jenny Atherly. This was scant knowledge for Peter in the glorification of his name through his immediate progenitors; but "Atherly of Atherly" still sounded pleasantly, and, as the young lady had said, smacked of old feudal days and honors. It was believed beyond doubt, even in their simple family records, — the fly-leaf of a Bible, — that Peter Atherly's great-grandfather was an Englishman who brought over to his Majesty's Virginian possessions his only son, then a boy. It was not established, however, to what class of deportation he belonged: whether he was suffering exile from religious or judicial conviction, or if he were only one of the articled "apprentices" who largely made up the American immi-

gration of those days. Howbeit, "Atherly" was undoubtedly an English name, even suggesting respectable and landed ancestry, and Peter Atherly was proud of it. He looked somewhat askance upon his Irish and German fellow citizens, and talked a good deal about "race." Two things, however, concerned him: he was not in looks certainly like any type of modern Englishman as seen either on the stage in San Francisco, or as an actual tourist in the mining regions, and his accent was undoubtedly Southwestern. He was tall and dark, with deep-set eyes in a singularly immobile countenance; he had an erect but lithe and sinewy figure even for his thirty odd years, and might easily have been taken for any other American except for the single exception that his nose was distinctly Roman, and gave him a distinguished air. There was a suggestion of Abraham Lincoln (and even of Don Quixote) in his tall, melancholy figure and length of limb, but nothing whatever that suggested an Englishman.

It was shortly after the christening of Atherly town that an incident occurred which at first shook, and then the more firmly established, his mild monomania. His widowed mother had been for the last two years an inmate of a private asylum for inebriates, through certain habits contracted while washing for the camp in the first year of her widowhood. This had always been a matter of open sympathy to Rough and Ready; but it was a secret reproach hinted at in Atherly, although it was known that the rich Peter Atherly kept his mother liberally supplied, and that both he and his sister "Jinny" or Jenny Atherly visited her frequently. One day he was telegraphed for, and on going to the asylum found Mrs. Atherly delirious and raving. Through her son's liberality she had bribed an attendant, and was fast succumbing to a private debauch. In the intervals of her delirium she called Peter by name, talked frenziedly and mysteriously of his "high connections" —

alluded to himself and his sister as being of the "true breed" — and with a certain vigor of epithet, picked up in the familiarity of the camp during the days when she was known as "Old Ma'am Atherly" or "Aunt Sally," declared that they were "no corn-cracking Hoosiers," "hayseed pikes," nor "northern Yankee scum," and that she should yet live to see them "holding their own lands again and the lands of their forefathers." Quieted at last by opiates, she fell into a more lucid but scarcely less distressing attitude. Recognizing her son again, as well as her own fast failing condition, she sarcastically thanked him for coming to "see her off," congratulated him that he would soon be spared the lie and expense of keeping her here on account of his pride, under the thin pretext of trying to "cure" her. She knew that Sally Atherly of Rough and Ready was n't considered fit company for "Atherly of Atherly" by his fine new friends. This and much more in a voice mingling maudlin sentiment with bitter resentment, and with an ominous glitter in her bloodshot and glairy eyes. Peter winced with a consciousness of the half-truth of her reproaches, but the curiosity and excitement awakened by the revelations of her frenzy were greater than his remorse. He said quickly: —

"You were speaking of father! — of his family — his lands and possessions. Tell me again!"

"Wot are ye givin' us?" she ejaculated in husky suspicion, opening upon him her beady eyes, in which the film of death was already gathering.

"Tell me of father, — my father and his family! his great-grandfather! — the Atherlys, my relations — what you were saying. What do you know about them?"

"*That's* all ye wanter know — is it? *That's* what ye 'r' comin' to the old washerwoman for — is it?" she burst out with the desperation of disgust. "Well — give it up! Ask me another!"

"But, mother — the old records, you know! The family Bible — what you once told us — me and Jinny!"

Something gurgled in her throat like a chuckle. With the energy of malevolence, she stammered: "There was n't no records — there was n't no family Bible! it 's all a lie — you hear me! Your Atherly that you 're so proud of was just a British bummer who was kicked outer his family in England and sent to buzz round in Americky. He honey-fogled me — Sally Magregor — out of a better family than his'n, in Kansas, and skyugled me away, but it was a straight out marriage, and I kin prove it. It was in the St. Louis papers, and I 've got it stored away safe enough in my trunk! You hear me! I 'm shoutin'! But he was n't no old settler in Mizzouri — he was n't descended from any settler, either! He was a new man outer England — fresh caught — and talked down his throat. And he fooled *me* — the darter of an old family that was settled on the right bank of the Mizzouri afore Dan'l Boone came to Kentucky — with his new philanderings. Then he broke up, and went all to pieces when we struck Californy, and left *me* — Sally Magregor, whose father had niggers of his own — to wash for Rough and Ready! *That 's* your Atherly! Take him! I don't want him — I 've done with him! I was done with him long afore — afore" — a cough checked her utterance, — "afore" — She gasped again, but the words seemed to strangle in her throat. Intent only on her words and scarcely heeding her sufferings, Peter was bending over her eagerly, when the doctor rudely pulled him away and lifted her to a sitting posture. But she never spoke again. The strongest restoratives quickly administered only left her in a state of scarcely breathing unconsciousness.

"Is she dying? Can't you bring her to," said the anxious Peter, "if only for a moment, doctor?"

"I 'm thinkin'," said the visiting doctor, an old Scotch army surgeon, looking at the rich Mr. Atherly with cool,

professional contempt, "that your mother willna do any more washing for me as in the old time, nor give up her life again to support her bairns. And it isna my eentention to bring her back to pain for the purposes of geeneral conversation!"

Nor, indeed, did she ever come back to any purpose, but passed away with her unfinished sentence. And her limbs were scarcely decently composed by the attendants before Peter was rummaging the trunk in her room for the paper she had spoken of. It was in an old work-box — a now faded yellow clipping from a newspaper, lying amidst spoils of cotton thread, buttons, and beeswax, which he even then remembered to have seen upon his mother's lap when she superadded the sewing on of buttons to her washing of the miners' shirts. And his dark and hollow cheek glowed with gratified sentiment as he read the clipping.

"We hear with regret of the death of Philip Atherly, Esq., of Rough and Ready, California. Mr. Atherly will be remembered by some of our readers as the hero of the romantic elopement of Miss Sallie Magregor, daughter of Colonel 'Bob' Magregor, which created such a stir in well-to-do circles some thirty years ago. It was known vaguely that the young couple had 'gone West,' — a then unknown region, — but it seems that after severe trials and tribulations on the frontier with savages, they emigrated early to Oregon, and then, on the outbreak of the gold fever, to California. But it will be a surprise to many to know that it has just transpired that Mr. Atherly was the second son of Sir Ashley Atherly, an English baronet, and by the death of his brother might have succeeded to the property and title."

He remained for some moments looking fixedly at the paper, until the commonplace paragraph imprinted itself upon his brain as no line of sage or poet had ever done, and then he folded it up and put it in his pocket. In his

exaltation he felt that even the mother he had never loved was promoted to a certain respect as his father's wife, although he was equally conscious of a new resentment against her for her contemptuous allusions to *his* father, and her evident hopeless inability to comprehend his position. His mother, he feared, was indeed low! — but *he* was his father's son! Nevertheless, he gave her a funeral at Atherly, long remembered for its barbaric opulence and display. Thirty carriages, procured from Sacramento at great expense, were freely offered to his friends to join in the astounding pageant. A wonderful casket of iron and silver, brought from San Francisco, held the remains of the ex-washerwoman of Rough and Ready. But a more remarkable innovation was the addition of a royal crown to the other ornamentation of the casket. Peter Atherly's ideas of heraldry were very vague, — Sacramento at that time offered him no opportunity of knowing what were the arms of the Atherlys, — and the introduction of the royal crown seemed to satisfy Peter's mind as to what a crest *might* be, while to the ordinary democratic mind it simply suggested that the corpse was English! Political criticism being thus happily averted, Mrs. Atherly's body was laid in the little cemetery, not far away from certain rude wooden crosses which marked the burial-place of wanderers whose very names were unknown, and in due time a marble shaft was erected over it. But when, the next day, the county paper contained, in addition to the column-and-a-half description of the funeral, the more formal announcement of the death of "Mrs. Sallie Atherly, wife of the late Philip Atherly, second son of Sir Ashley Atherly, of England," criticism and comment broke out. The old pioneers of Rough and Ready felt that they had been imposed upon, and that in some vague way the unfortunate woman had made them the victims of a huge practical joke during all these years. That she had grimly enjoyed their ignorance of her position

[illegible] "Well, I remember [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] — [illegible] — [illegible] [illegible] "No, sir," she [illegible] [illegible] and she just gave [illegible] like speckled [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]."

Even the same citizens in Atherly felt an equal resentment against her, but from different motives. That her [illegible] and her powerful vocabulary were all the [illegible] of her aristocratic alliance they never doubted. And although it brought the virtues of their own superior republican [illegible] into greater contrast, they felt a scandal at having been [illegible] into attending this gilded funeral of discarded rank. Peter Atherly found himself unpopular in his own town. The whisky [illegible] from his first "Washington," and the [illegible] [illegible] imbibed at his "Gin Mill," equally criticised him. He could not understand it. His peculiar predilections had been accepted before, when they were mere presumptions: why should they not now, when they were admitted facts? He was conscious of no change in himself since the funeral! Yet the criticism went on. Presently it took the milder but more contagious form of ridicule. In his own hotel, built with his own money, and in his own presence, he had heard a reckless frequenter of the bar-room decline some proffered refreshment on the ground that "he only drank with his titled relatives." A local humorist, amidst the applause of an admiring crowd at the post-office window, had openly accused the postmaster

of withholding letters to him from his only surviving brother. — the Dook of Doncherknow." "The ole dooky never once missed the mail to let me know wot 's goin' on in me childhood's home," remarked the humorist plaintively; — and yer 's this dod-blasted gov'ment mule of a postmaster keepin' me letters back!" Letters with pretentious and gilded coats of arms, taken from the decorated inner lining of cigar-boxes, were posted to prominent citizens. The neighboring and unregenerated settlement of Red Dog was more outrageous in its contribution. The Red Dog "Sentinel" in commenting on the death of "Haulbowline Tom," a drunken English man-o'-war's man, said: "It may not be generally known that our regretted fellow citizen, while serving on H. M. S. Boxer, was secretly married to Queen Kikalu of the Friendly Group; but, unlike some of our prosperous neighbors, he never boasted of his royal alliance, and resisted with steady British pluck any invitation to share the throne. Indeed, any allusion to the subject affected him deeply. There are those among us who will remember the beautiful portrait of his royal bride tattooed upon his left arm with the royal crest and the crossed flags of the two nations." Only Peter Atherly and his sister understood the sting inflicted either by accident or design in the latter sentence. Both he and his sister had some singular hieroglyphic branded on their arms, — probably a reminiscence of their life on the plains in their infant Indian captivity. But there was no mistaking the general sentiment. The criticisms of a small town may become inevasible. Atherly determined to take the first opportunity to leave Rough and Ready. He was rich; his property was secure; there was no reason why he should stay where his family pretensions were a drawback. And a further circumstance determined his resolution.

He was awaiting his sister in his new house on a little crest above the town. She had been at the time of her

mother's death, and since, a private boarder in the Sacred Heart Convent at Santa Clara, whence she had been summoned to the funeral, but had returned the next day. Few people had noticed in her brother's carriage the veiled figure which might have belonged to one of the religious orders; still less did they remember the dark, lank, heavy-browed girl who had sometimes been seen about Rough and Ready. For she had her brother's melancholy, and greater reticence, and had continued of her own free will, long after her girlish pupilage at the convent, to live secluded under its maternal roof without taking orders. A general suspicion that she was either a religious "crank," or considered herself too good to live in a mountain mining town, had not contributed to her brother's popularity. In her abstraction from worldly ambitions she had, naturally, taken no part in her brother's family pretensions. He had given her an independent allowance, and she was supposed to be equally a sharer in his good fortune. Yet she had suddenly declared her intention of returning to Atherly, to consult him on affairs of importance. Peter was both surprised and eager; there was but little affection between them, but, preoccupied with his one idea, he was satisfied that she wanted to talk about the family.

But he was amazed, disappointed, and disconcerted. For Jenny Atherly, the sober recluse of Santa Clara, hidden in her sombre draperies at the funeral, was no longer to be recognized in the fashionable, smartly but somewhat overdressed woman he saw before him. In spite of her large features and the distinguishing Roman nose, like his own, she looked even pretty in her excitement. She had left the convent, she was tired of the life there, she was satisfied that a religious vocation would not suit her. In brief, she intended to enjoy herself like other women. If he really felt a pride in the family, he ought to take her out, like other brothers, and "give her a show." He could do it

there if he liked, and she would keep house for him. If he did n't want to, she must have enough money to keep her fashionably in San Francisco. But she wanted excitement, and that she *would have!* She wanted to go to balls, theatres, and entertainments, and she intended to! Her voice grew quite high, and her dark cheek glowed with some new-found emotion.

Astounded as he was, Peter succumbed. It was better that she should indulge her astounding caprice under his roof than elsewhere. It would not do for the sister of an Atherly to provoke scandal. He gave entertainments, picnics, and parties, and "Jinny" Atherly plunged into these mild festivities with the enthusiasm of a school-girl. She not only could dance with feverish energy all night, but next day could mount a horse — she was a fearless rider — and lead the most accomplished horsemen. She was a good shot, she walked with the untiring foot of a coyote, she threaded the woods with the instinct of a pioneer. Peter regarded her with a singular mingling of astonishment and fear. Surely she had not learned this at school! These were not the teachings nor the sports of the good sisters! He once dared to interrogate her regarding this change in her habits. "I always *felt* like it," she answered quickly, "but I kept it down. I used sometimes to feel that I could n't stand it any longer, but must rush out and do something," she said passionately; "but," she went on with furtive eyes, and a sudden wild timidity like that of a fawn, "I was afraid! I was afraid *it was like mother!* It seemed to me to be *her* blood that was rising in me, and I kept it down, — I did n't want to be like her, — and I prayed and struggled against it. Did you," she said, suddenly grasping his hand, "ever feel like that?"

But Peter never had. His melancholy faith in his father's race had left no thought of his mother's blood mingling with it. "But," he said gravely, "believing this, why did you change?"

"Because I could hold out no longer. I should have gone crazy. Times I wanted to take some of those meek nuns, some of those white-faced pupils with their blue eyes and wavy flaxen hair, and strangle them. I could n't strive and pray and struggle any longer *there*, and so I came here to let myself out! I suppose when I get married — and I ought to, with my money — it may change me! You don't suppose," she said, with a return of her wild-animal-like timidity, "it is anything that was in *father*, in those *Atherlys*, — do you?"

But Peter had no idea of anything but virtue in the Atherly blood; he had heard that the upper class of Europeans were fond of field sports and of hunting; it was odd that his sister should inherit this propensity and not he. He regarded her more kindly for this evidence of race. "You think of getting married?" he said more gently, yet with a certain brotherly doubt that any man could like her enough, even with her money. "Is there any one here would — suit you?" he added diplomatically.

"No — I hate them all!" she burst out. "There is n't one I don't despise for his sickening, foppish, womanish airs."

Nevertheless, it was quite evident that some of the men were attracted by her singular originality and a certain good comradeship in her ways. And it was on one of their riding excursions that Peter noticed that she was singled out by a good-looking, blond-haired young lawyer of the town for his especial attentions. As the cavalcade straggled in climbing the mountain, the young fellow rode close to her saddle-bow, and as the distance lengthened between the other stragglers, they at last were quite alone. When the trail became more densely wooded, Peter quite lost sight of them. But when, a few moments later, having lost the trail himself, they again appeared in the distance before him, he was so amazed that he unconsciously halted. For

the two horses were walking side by side, and the stranger's arm was round his sister's waist.

Had Peter any sense of humor he might have smiled at this weakness in his Amazonian sister, but he saw only the serious, practical side of the situation, with, of course, its inevitable relation to his one controlling idea. The young man was in good practice, and would have made an eligible husband to any one else. But was he fit to mate with an Atherly? What would those as yet unknown and powerful relatives say to it? At the same time he could not help knowing that "Jinny," in the eccentricities of her virgin spinsterhood, might be equally objectionable to them, as she certainly was a severe trial to him here. If she were off his hands he might be able to prosecute his search for his relatives with more freedom. After all, there were *mésalliances* in all families, and being a woman she was not in the direct line. Instead, therefore, of spurring forward to join them, he lingered a little until they passed out of sight, and until he was joined by a companion from behind. Him, too, he purposely delayed. They were walking slowly, breathing their mustangs, when his companion suddenly uttered a cry of alarm, and sprang from his horse. For on the trail before them lay the young lawyer quite unconscious, with his riderless steed nipping the young leaves of the underbrush. He was evidently stunned by a fall, although across his face was a livid welt which might have been caused by collision with the small elastic limb of a sapling, or a blow from a riding-whip; happily the last idea was only in Peter's mind. As they lifted him up he came slowly to consciousness. He was bewildered and dazed at first, but as he began to speak the color came back freshly to his face. He could not conceive, he stammered, what had happened. He was riding with Miss Atherly, and he supposed his horse had slipped upon some withered pine needles and thrown him! A

spasm of pain crossed his face suddenly, and he lifted his hand to the top of his head. Was he hurt *there?* No, but perhaps his hair, which was flowing and curly, had caught in the branches — like Absalom's! He tried to smile, and even begged them to assist him to his horse that he might follow his fair companion, who would be wondering where he was; but Peter, satisfied that he had received no serious injury, hurriedly enjoined him to stay, while he himself would follow his sister. Putting spurs to his horse, he succeeded, in spite of the slippery trail, in overtaking her near the summit. At the sound of his horse's hoofs she wheeled quickly, came dashing furiously towards him, and only pulled up at the sound of his voice. But she had not time to change her first attitude and expression, which was something which perplexed and alarmed him. Her long, lithe figure was half crouching, half clinging to the horse's back, her loosened hair flying over her shoulders, her dark eyes gleaming with an odd, nymph-like mischief. Her white teeth flashed as she recognized him, but her laugh was still mocking and uncanny. He took refuge in indignation.

"What has happened?" he said sharply.

"The fool tried to kiss me!" she said simply. "And I — I — let out at him — like mother!"

Nevertheless, she gave him one of those shy, timid glances he had noticed before, and began coiling something around her fingers, with a suggestion of coy embarrassment, indescribably inconsistent with her previous masculine independence.

"You might have killed him," said Peter angrily.

"Perhaps I might! *Ought* I have killed him, Peter?" she said anxiously, yet with the same winning, timid smile. If she had not been his sister, he would have thought her quite handsome.

"As it is," he said impetuously, "you have made a frightful scandal here."

"*He* won't say anything about it — will he?" she inquired shyly, still twisting the something around her finger.

Peter did not reply; perhaps the young lawyer really loved her and would keep her secret! But he was vexed, and there was something maniacal in her twisting fingers.

"What have you got there?" he said sharply.

She shook the object in the air before her with a laugh. "Only a lock of his hair," she said gayly; "but I did n't *cut* it off!"

"Throw it away, and come here!" he said angrily.

But she only tucked the little blond curl into her waist belt and shook her head. He urged his horse forward, but she turned and fled, laughing as he pursued her. Being the better rider she could easily evade him whenever he got too near, and in this way they eventually reached the town and their house long before their companions. But she was far enough ahead of her brother to be able to dismount and hide her trophy with childish glee before he arrived.

She was right in believing that her unfortunate cavalier would make no revelation of her conduct, and his catastrophe passed as an accident. But Peter could not disguise the fact that much of his unpopularity was shared by his sister. The matrons of Atherly believed that she was "fast," and remembered more distinctly than ever the evil habits of her mother. That she would, in the due course of time, "take to drink," they never doubted. Her dancing was considered outrageous in its unfettered freedom, and her extraordinary powers of endurance were looked upon as "masculine" by the weaker girls whose partners she took from them. She reciprocally looked down upon them, and made no secret of her contempt for their small refinements and fancies. She affected only the society of men, and even treated them with a familiarity that was

both fearless and scornful. Peter saw that it was useless to face the opposition; Miss Atherly did not seem to encourage the renewal of the young lawyer's attentions, although it was evident that he was still attracted by her, nor did she seem to invite advances from others. He must go away — and he would have to take her with him. It seemed ridiculous that a woman of thirty, of masculine character, should require a chaperon in a brother of equal age; but Peter knew the singular blending of childlike ignorance with this Amazonian quality. He had made his arrangements for an absence from Atherly of three or four years, and they departed together. The young fair-haired lawyer came to the stagecoach office to see them off. Peter could detect no sentiment in his sister's familiar farewell of her unfortunate suitor. At New York, however, it was arranged that "Jinny" should stay with some friends whom they had made en route, and that, if she wished, she could come to Europe later, and join him in London.

Thus relieved of one, Peter Atherly of Atherly started on his cherished quest of his other and more remote relations.

CHAPTER II

Peter Atherly had been four months in England, but knew little of the country until one summer afternoon when his carriage rolled along the well-ordered road between Nonningsby Station and Ashley Grange.

In that four months he had consulted authorities, examined records, visited the Heralds' College, written letters, and made a few friends. A rich American, tracing his genealogical tree, was not a new thing — even in that day — in London; but there was something original and simple in his methods, and so much that was grave, reserved, and un-American in his personality, that it awakened interest.

A recognition that he was a foreigner, but a puzzled doubt, however, of his exact nationality, which he found everywhere, at first pained him, but he became reconciled to it at about the same time that his English acquaintances abandoned their own reserve and caution before the greater reticence of this melancholy American, and actually became the questioners! In this way his quest became known only as a disclosure of his own courtesy, and offers of assistance were pressed eagerly upon him. That was why Sir Edward Atherly found himself gravely puzzled, as he sat with his family solicitor one morning in the library of Ashley Grange.

"Humph!" said Sir Edward. "And you say he has absolutely no other purpose in making these inquiries?"

"Positively none," returned the solicitor. "He is even willing to sign a renunciation of any claim which might arise out of this information. It is rather a singular case, but he seems to be a rich man and quite able to indulge his harmless caprices."

"And you are quite sure he is Philip's son?"

"Quite, from the papers he brings me. Of course I informed him that even if he should be able to establish a legal marriage he could expect nothing as next of kin, as you had children of your own. He seemed to know that already, and avowed that his only wish was to satisfy his own mind."

"I suppose he wants to claim kinship and all that sort of thing for society's sake?"

"I do not think so," said the solicitor dryly. "I suggested an interview with you, but he seemed to think it quite unnecessary, if *I* could give him the information he required."

"Ha!" said Sir Edward promptly, "we'll invite him here. Lady Atherly can bring in some people to see him. Is he — ahem — What is he like? The usual American, I suppose?"

"Not at all. Quite foreign-looking — dark, and rather like an Italian. There is no resemblance to Mr. Philip," he said, glancing at the painting of a flaxen-haired child fondling a greyhound under the elms of Ashley Park.

"Ah! Yes, yes! Perhaps the mother was one of those Southern creoles, or mulattoes," said Sir Edward, with an Englishman's tolerant regard for the vagaries of people who were clearly not English; "they 're rather attractive women, I hear."

"I think you do quite well to be civil to him," said the solicitor. "He seems to take an interest in the family, and being rich, and apparently only anxious to enhance the family prestige, you ought to know him. Now, in reference to those mortgages on Appleby Farm, if you could get" —

"Yes, yes!" said Sir Edward quickly; "we 'll have him down here; and, I say! *you 'll* come too?"

The solicitor bowed. "And, by the way," continued Sir Edward, "there was a girl, too, — was n't there? He has a sister, I believe?"

"Yes, but he has left her in America."

"Ah, yes! — very good — yes! — of course. We 'll have Lord Greyshott and Sir Roger and old Lady Everton, — she knows all about Sir Ashley and the family. And — er — is he young or old?"

"About thirty, I should say, Sir Edward."

"Ah, well! We 'll have Lady Elfrida over from the Towers."

Had Peter known of these preparations, he might have turned back to Nonningsby without even visiting the old church in Ashley Park, which he had been told held the ashes of his ancestors. For during these four months the conviction that he was a foreigner and that he had little or nothing in common with things here had been clearly forced upon him. He could recognize some kinship in the

manners and customs of the people to those he had known in the West and on the Atlantic coast, but not to his own individuality, and he seemed even more a stranger here — where he had expected to feel the thrill of consanguinity — than in the West. He had accepted the invitation of the living Atherly for the sake of the Atherlys long dead and forgotten. As the great quadrangle of stone and ivy lifted itself out of the park, he looked longingly towards the little square tower which peeped from between the yews nearer the road. As the carriage drove up to the carved archway whence so many Atherlys had issued into the world, he could not believe that any of his blood had gone forth from it, or, except himself, had ever entered it before. Once in the great house he felt like a prisoner as he wandered through the long corridors to his room; even the noble trees beyond his mullioned windows seemed of another growth than those he had known.

There was no doubt that he created a sensation at Ashley Grange, not only from his singular kinship, but from his striking individuality. The Atherlys and their guests were fascinated and freely admiring. His very originality, which prevented them from comparing him with any English or American standard of excellence, gave them a comfortable assurance of safety in their admiration. His reserve, his seriousness, his simplicity, very unlike their own, and yet near enough to suggest a delicate flattery, was in his favor. So was his naïve frankness in regard to his status in the family, shown in the few words of greeting with Sir Ashley, and in his later simple yet free admissions regarding his obscure youth, his former poverty, and his present wealth. He boasted of neither; he was disturbed by neither. Standing alone, a stranger, for the first time in an assemblage of distinguished and titled men and women, he betrayed no consciousness; surrounded for the first time by objects which he knew his wealth could not buy, he showed the most un-

mistakable indifference, — the indifference of temperament. The ladies vied with each other to attack this unimpressible nature, — this profound isolation from external attraction. They followed him about, they looked into his dark, melancholy eyes; it was impossible, they thought, that he could continue this superb acting forever. A glance, a smile, a burst of ingenuous confidence, a covert appeal to his chivalry would yet catch him tripping. But the melancholy eyes that had gazed at the treasures of Ashley Grange and the opulent ease of its guests without kindling opened to their first emotion, — wonder! At which Lady Elfrida, who had ingenuously admired him, hated him a little, as the first step towards a kindlier feeling.

The next day, having declared his intention of visiting Ashley Church, and, as frankly, his intention of going there alone, he slipped out in the afternoon and made his way quietly through the park to the square ivied tower he had first seen. In this tranquil level length of the wood there was the one spot, the churchyard, where, oddly enough, the green earth heaved into little billows as if to show the turbulence of that life which those who lay below them had lately quitted. It was a relief to the somewhat studied and formal monotony of the well-ordered woodland, — every rood of which had been paced by visitors, keepers, or poachers, — to find those decrepit and bending tombstones, lurching at every angle, or deeply sinking into the green sea of forgetfulness around them. All this, and the trodden paths of the villagers towards that common place of meeting, struck him as being more human than anything he had left behind him at the Grange.

He entered the ivy-grown porch and stared for a moment at the half-legal official parochial notices posted on the oaken door, — his first obtrusive intimation of the combination of church and state, — and hesitated. He was not prepared to find that this last resting-place of his people had some-

thing to do with taxes and tithes, and that a certain material respectability and security attended his votive sigh. God and the reigning sovereign of the realm preserved a decorous alliance in the royal arms that appeared above the official notices. Presently he pushed open the door gently and entered the nave. For a moment it seemed to him as if the arched gloom of the woods he had left behind was repeated in the dim aisle and vaulted roof; there was an earthy odor, as if the church itself, springing from the fertilizing dust below, had taken root in the soil; the checkers of light from the faded stained-glass windows fell like the flicker of leaves on the pavement. He paused before the cold altar, and started, for beside him lay the recumbent figure of a warrior pillowed on his helmet with the paraphernalia of his trade around him. A sudden childish memory of the great Western plains, and the biers of the Indian "braves" raised on upright poles against the staring sky and above the sun-baked prairie, rushed upon him. There, too, had lain the weapons of the departed chieftain; there, too, lay the Indian's "faithful hound," here simulated by the cross-legged crusader's canine effigy. And now, strangest of all, he found that this unlooked-for recollection and remembrance thrilled him more at that moment than the dead before him. Here they rested, — the Atherlys of centuries; recumbent in armor or priestly robes, upright in busts that were periwigged or hidden in long curls, above the marble record of their deeds and virtues. Some of these records were in Latin, — an unknown tongue to Peter, — some in a quaint English almost as unintelligible; but none as foreign to him as the dead themselves. Their banners waved above his head; their voices filled the silent church, but fell upon his vacant eye and duller ear. He was none of them.

Presently he was conscious of a footstep, so faint, so subtle, that it might have come from a peregrinating ghost. He turned quickly and saw Lady Elfrida, half bold, yet

half frightened, halting beside a pillar of the chancel. But there was nothing of the dead about her: she was radiating and pulsating with the uncompromising and material freshness of English girlhood. The wild rose in the hedgerow was not more tangible than her cheek, nor the summer sky more clearly cool and blue than her eyes. The vigor of health and unfettered freedom of limb was in her figure from her buckled walking-shoe to her brown hair topped by a sailor hat. The assurance and contentment of a well-ordered life, of secured position and freedom from vain anxieties or expectations, were visible in every line of her refined, delicate, and evenly quiescent features. And yet Lady Elfrida, for the first time in her girlhood, felt a little nervous.

Yet she was frank, too, with the frankness of those who have no thought of being misunderstood. She said she had come there out of curiosity to see how he would "get on" with his ancestors. She had been watching him from the chancel ever since he came, — and she was disappointed. As far as emotion went she thought he had the advantage of the stoniest and longest dead of them all. Perhaps he did not like them? But he must be careful what he *said*, for some of her own people were there, — manifestly this one. (She put the toe of her buckled shoe on the crusader Peter had just looked at.) And then there was another in the corner. So she had a right to come there as well as he, — and she could act as cicerone! This one was a De Brecy, one of King John's knights, who married an Atherly. (She swung herself into a half-sitting posture on the effigy of the dead knight, composed her straight short skirt over her trim ankles, and looked up into Peter's dark face.) That would make them some kind of relations, — would n't it? He must come over to Bentley Towers and see the rest of the De Brecys in the chapel there to-morrow. Perhaps there might be some he liked better, and who looked more like

him. For there was no one here or at the Grange who resembled him in the least.

He assented to the truth of this with such grave, disarming courtesy, and yet with such undisguised wonder, — as she appeared to talk with greater freedom to a stranger than an American girl would, — that she at once popped off the crusader, and accompanied him somewhat more demurely around the church. Suddenly she stopped with a slight exclamation.

They had halted before a tablet to the memory of a later Atherly, an officer of his Majesty's 100th Foot, who was killed at Braddock's defeat. The tablet was supported on the one side by a weeping Fame, and on the other by a manacled North American Indian. She stammered and said: "You see there are other Atherlys who went to America even before your father," and then stopped with a sense of having made a slip.

A wild and inexplicable resentment against this complacent historical outrage suddenly took possession of Peter. He knew that his rage was inconsistent with his usual calm, but he could not help it! His swarthy cheek glowed, his dark eyes flashed, he almost trembled with excitement as he hurriedly pointed out to Lady Elfrida that the Indians were *victorious* in that ill-fated expedition of the British forces, and that the captive savage was an allegorical lie. So swift and convincing was his emotion that the young girl, knowing nothing of the subject and caring less, shared his indignation, followed him with anxious eyes, and their hands for an instant touched in innocent and generous sympathy. And then — he knew not how or why — a still more wild and terrible idea sprang up in his fancy. He knew it was madness, yet for a moment he could only stand and grapple with it silently and breathlessly. It was to seize this young and innocent girl, this witness of his disappointment, this complacent and beautiful type of all they

It was the night of a levee at the White House. The East Room was crowded with smartly dressed men and women of the capital, quaintly simple legislators from remote States in bygone fashions, officers in uniform, and the diplomatic circle blazing with orders. The invoker of this brilliant assembly stood in simple evening dress near the door, — unattended and hedged by no formality. He shook the hand of the new Congressman heartily, congratulated him by name, and turned smilingly to the next comer. Presently there was a slight stir at one of the opposite doors, the crowd fell back, and five figures stalked majestically into the centre of the room. They were the leading chiefs of an Indian reservation coming to pay their respects to their "Great Father," the President. Their costumes were a mingling of the picturesque with the grotesque; of tawdriness with magnificence; of artificial tinsel and glitter with the regal spoils of the chase; of childlike vanity with barbaric pride. Yet before these the glittering orders and ribbons of the diplomats became dull and meaningless, the uniforms of the officers mere servile livery. Their painted, immobile faces and plumed heads towered with grave dignity above the meaner crowd; their inscrutable eyes returned no response to the timid glances directed towards them. They stood by themselves, alone and impassive, yet their presence filled the room with the sense of kings. The unostentatious, simple republican court suddenly seemed to have become royal. Even the interpreter who stood between their remote dignity and the nearer civilized world acquired the status of a court chamberlain.

When their "Great Father," apparently the less important personage, had smilingly received them, a political colleague approached Peter and took his arm. "Gray Eagle would like to speak with you. Come on! Here's your chance! You may be put on the Committee on Indian Relations, and pick up a few facts. Remember we

want a firm policy; no more palaver about the 'Great Father,' and no more blankets and guns! You know what we used to say out West, 'The only "Good Indian" is a dead one.' So wade in, and hear what the old plug hat has to say."

Peter permitted himself to be led to the group. Even at that moment he remembered the figure of the Indian on the tomb at Ashley Grange, and felt a slight flash of satisfaction over the superior height and bearing of Gray Eagle.

"How!" said Gray Eagle. "How!" said the other four chiefs. "How!" repeated Peter instinctively. At a gesture from Gray Eagle the interpreter said: "Let your friend stand back; Gray Eagle has nothing to say to him. He wishes to speak only with you."

Peter's friend reluctantly withdrew, but threw a cautioning glance towards him. "Ugh!" said Gray Eagle. "Ugh!" said the other chiefs. A few guttural words followed to the interpreter, who turned, and facing Peter with the monotonous impassiveness which he had caught from the chiefs, said: "He says he knew your father. He was a great chief, — with many horses and many squaws. He is dead."

"My father was an Englishman, — Philip Atherly!" said Peter, with an odd nervousness creeping over him.

The interpreter repeated the words to Gray Eagle, who, after a guttural "Ugh!" answered in his own tongue.

"He says," continued the interpreter with a slight shrug, yet relapsing into his former impassiveness, "that your father was a great chief, and your mother a paleface, or white woman. She was captured with an Englishman, but she became the wife of the chief while in captivity. She was only released before the birth of her children, but a year or two afterwards she brought them as infants to see their father, — the Great Chief, — and to get the mark of

their tribe. He says you and your sister are each marked on the left arm."

Then Gray Eagle opened his mouth and uttered his first English sentence. "His father, big Injin, take common white squaw! Papoose no good, — too much white squaw mother, not enough big Injin father! Look! He big man, but no can bear pain! Ugh!"

The interpreter turned in time to catch Peter. He had fainted.

CHAPTER III

A hot afternoon on the plains. A dusty cavalcade of United States cavalry and commissary wagons, which from a distance preserved a certain military precision of movement, but on nearer view resolved itself into straggling troopers in twos and fours interspersed between the wagons, two non-commissioned officers and a guide riding ahead, who had already fallen into the cavalry slouch, but off to the right, smartly erect and cadet-like, the young lieutenant in command. A wide road that had the appearance of being at once well traveled and yet deserted, and that, although well defined under foot, still seemed to disappear and lose itself a hundred feet ahead in the monotonous level. A horizon that in that clear, dry, hazeless atmosphere never mocked you, yet never changed, but kept its eternal rim of mountains at the same height and distance from hour to hour and day to day. Dust — a parching alkaline powder that cracked the skin — everywhere, clinging to the hubs and spokes of the wheels, without being disturbed by movement, incrusting the cavalryman from his high boots to the crossed sabres of his cap; going off in small puffs like explosions under the plunging hoof of the horses, but too heavy to rise and follow them. A reeking smell of horse sweat and boot leather that lingered in the road long after

the train had passed. An external silence broken only by the cough of a jaded horse in the suffocating dust, or the cracking of harness leather. Within one of the wagons that seemed a miracle of military neatness and methodical stowage, a lazy conversation carried on by a grizzled driver and sunbrowned farrier.

"'Who be you?' sezee. 'I'm Peter Atherly, a member of Congress,' sez the long, dark-complected man, sezee, 'and I'm on a commission for looking into this yer Injin grievance,' sezee. 'You may be God Almighty,' sez Nebraska Bill, sezee, 'but you look a d—d sight more like a hoss-stealin' Apache, and we don't want any of your psalm-singing, big-talkin' peacemakers interferin' with our ways of treatin' pizen, — you hear me? I'm shoutin',' sezee. With that the dark-complected man's eyes began to glisten, and he sorter squirmed all over to get at Bill, and Bill outs with his battery — Whoa, will ye; what's up with *you* now?" The latter remark was directed to the young spirited near horse he was driving, who was beginning to be strangely excited.

"What happened then?" said the farrier lazily.

"Well," continued the driver, having momentarily quieted his horse, "I reckoned it was about time for me to wheel into line, for fellers of the Bill stripe, out on the plains, would ez leave plug a man in citizen's clothes, even if he was the President himself, as they would drop on an Injin or a nigger. 'Look here, Bill,' sez I, 'I'm escortin' this stranger under gov'ment orders, and I'm responsible for him. I ain't allowed to waste gov'ment powder and shot on *your* kind onless I've orders, but if you'll wait till I strip off this shell[1] I'll lam the stuffin' outer ye, afore the stranger.' With that Bill just danced with rage, but dassent fire, for *he* knew, and *I* knew, that if he'd plugged me he'd been a dead frontiersman afore the next mornin'."

[1] Cavalry jacket.

"But you 'd have had to give him up to the authorities, and a jury of his own kind would have set him free."

"Not much! If you had n't just joined, you 'd know that ain't the way o' 30th Cavalry," returned the driver. "The kernel would have issued his orders to bring in Bill dead or alive, and the 30th would have managed to bring him in *dead!* Then your jury might have sat on him! Tell you what, chaps of the Bill stripe don't care overmuch to tackle the yaller braid." [1]

"But what 's this yer Congressman interferin' for, anyway?"

"He 's a rich Californian. Thinks he 's got a 'call,' I reckon, to look arter Injins, just as them Abolitionists looked arter slaves. And get hated just as they was by the folks here, — and as *we* are, too, for the matter of that."

"Well, I dunno," rejoined the farrier, "it don't seem nateral for white men to quarrel with each other about the way to treat an Injin, and that Injin lyin' in ambush to shoot 'em both. And ef gov'ment would only make up its mind how to treat 'em, instead of one day pretendin' to be their 'Great Father' and treatin' 'em like babies, and the next makin' treaties with 'em like as they wos forriners, and the next sendin' out a handful of us to lick ten thousand of 'em — Wot 's the use of *one* regiment — even two — agin a nation — on their own ground?"

"A nation, — and on their own ground, — that 's just whar you 've hit it, Softy. That 's the argument of that Congressman Atherly, as I 've heard him talk with the kernel."

"And what did the kernel say?"

"The kernel reckoned it was his business to obey orders, — and so should you. So shut your head! If ye wanted to talk about gov'ment ye might say suthin' about its usin' us to convoy picnics and excursion parties around, who come

[1] Characteristic trimming of cavalry jacket.

the train had passed. An external silence broken only by the cough of a jaded horse in the suffocating dust, or the cracking of harness leather. Within one of the wagons that seemed a miracle of military neatness and methodical stowage, a lazy conversation carried on by a grizzled driver and sunbrowned farrier.

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out here to have a day's shootin', under some big-wig of a political boss or a railroad president, with a letter to the general. And *we 're* told off to look arter their precious skins, and keep the Injins off 'em, — and they shootin' or skeerin' off the Injins' nat'ral game, and our provender! Darn my skin ef there 'll be much to scout for ef this goes on. And b'gosh! — ef they are n't now ringin' in a lot of titled forriners to hunt 'big game,' as they call it, — Lord This-and-That and Count So-and-So, — all of 'em with letters to the general from the Washington cabinet to show 'hospitality,' or from millionaires who 've bin hobnobbin' with 'em in the old country. And darn my skin ef some of 'em ain't bringin' their wives and sisters along too. There was a lord and lady passed through here under escort last week, and we 're goin' to pick up some more of 'em at Fort Biggs to-morrow, — and I reckon some of us will be told off to act as ladies' maids or milliners. Nothin' short of a good Injin scare, I reckon, would send them and us about our reg'lar business. Whoa, then, will ye? At it again, are ye? What 's gone of the d—d critter?"

Here the fractious near horse was again beginning to show signs of disturbance and active terror. His quivering nostrils were turned towards the wind, and he almost leaped the centre pole in his frantic effort to avoid it. The eyes of the two men were turned instinctively in that direction. Nothing was to be seen, — the illimitable plain and the sinking sun were all that met the eye. But the horse continued to struggle, and the wagon stopped. Then it was discovered that the horse of an adjacent trooper was also laboring under the same mysterious excitement, and at the same moment wagon No. 3 halted. The infection of some inexplicable terror was spreading among them. Then two non-commissioned officers came riding down the line at a sharp canter, and were joined quickly by the young lieutenant, who gave an order. The trumpeter instinc-

tively raised his instrument to his lips, but was stopped by another order.

And then, as seen by a distant observer, a singular spectacle was unfolded. The straggling train suddenly seemed to resolve itself into a large, widening circle of horsemen, revolving round and partly hiding the few heavy wagons that were being rapidly freed from their struggling teams. These, too, joined the circle, and were driven before the whirling troopers. Gradually the circle seemed to grow smaller under the "winding-up" of those evolutions, until the horseless wagons reappeared again, motionless, fronting the four points of the compass, thus making the radii of a smaller inner circle, into which the teams of the wagons as well as the troopers' horses were closely "wound up" and densely packed together in an immovable mass. As the circle became smaller the troopers leaped from their horses, — which, however, continued to blindly follow each other in the narrower circle, — and ran to the wagons, carbines in hand. In five minutes from the time of giving the order the straggling train was a fortified camp, the horses corralled in the centre, the dismounted troopers securely posted with their repeating carbines in the angles of the rude bastions formed by the deserted wagons, and ready for an attack. The stampede, if such it was, was stopped.

And yet no cause for it was to be seen! Nothing in earth or sky suggested a reason for this extraordinary panic, or the marvelous evolution that suppressed it. The guide, with three men in open order, rode out and radiated across the empty plain, returning as empty of result. In an hour the horses were sufficiently calmed and fed, the camp slowly unwound itself, the teams were set to and were led out of the circle, and as the rays of the setting sun began to expand fanlike across the plain, the cavalcade moved on. But between them and the sinking sun, and visible through its last

rays, was a faint line of haze parallel with their track. Yet even this, too, quickly faded away.

Had the guide, however, penetrated half a mile further to the west, he would have come upon the cause of the panic, and a spectacle more marvelous than that he had just witnessed. For the illimitable plain with its monotonous prospect was far from being level; a hundred yards further on he would have slowly and imperceptibly descended into a depression nearly a mile in width. Here he not only would have completely lost sight of his own cavalcade, but have come upon another thrice its length. For here was a trailing line of jog-trotting dusky shapes, some crouching on dwarf ponies half their size, some trailing lances, lodge-poles, rifles, women and children after them, all moving with a monotonous rhythmic motion as marked as the military precision of the other cavalcade, and always on a parallel line with it. They had done so all day, keeping touch and distance by stealthy videttes that crept and crawled along the imperceptible slope towards the unconscious white men. It was, no doubt, the near proximity of one of those watchers that had touched the keen scent of the troopers' horses.

The moon came up; the two cavalcades, scarcely a mile apart, moved on in unison together. Then suddenly the dusky caravan seemed to arise, stretch itself out, and swept away like a morning mist towards the west. The bugles of Fort Biggs had just rung out.

. . . . . .

Peter Atherly was up early the next morning pacing the veranda of the commandant's house at Fort Biggs. It had been his intention to visit the new Indian Reservation that day, but he had just received a letter announcing an unexpected visit from his sister, who wished to join him. He had never told her the secret of their Indian paternity, as it had been revealed to him from the scornful lips of Gray

Eagle a year before; he knew her strangely excitable nature; besides, she was a wife now, and the secret would have to be shared with her husband. When he himself had recovered from the shock of the revelation, two things had impressed themselves upon his reserved and gloomy nature: a horror of his previous claim upon the Atherlys, and an infinite pity and sense of duty towards his own race. He had devoted himself and his increasing wealth to this one object; it seemed to him at times almost providential that his position as a legislator, which he had accepted as a whim or fancy, should have given him this singular opportunity.

Yet it was not an easy task or an enviable position. He was obliged to divorce himself from his political party as well as keep clear of the wild schemes of impractical enthusiasts, too practical "contractors," and the still more helpless bigotry of Christian civilizers, who would have regenerated the Indian with a text which he did not understand and they were unable to illustrate by example. He had expected the opposition of lawless frontiersmen and ignorant settlers — as roughly indicated in the conversation already recorded; indeed, he had felt it difficult to argue his humane theories under the smoking roof of a raided settler's cabin, whose owner, however, had forgotten his own repeated provocations, or the trespass of which he was proud. But Atherly's unaffected and unobtrusive zeal, his fixity of purpose, his undoubted courage, his self-abnegation, and above all the gentle melancholy and half-philosophical wisdom of this new missionary, won him the respect and assistance of even the most callous or the most skeptical of officials. The Secretary of the Interior had given him carte blanche; the President trusted him, and it was said had granted him extraordinary powers. Oddly enough it was only his own Californian constituency, who had once laughed at what they deemed his early aristocratic pretensions, who now found fault with his democratic philan-

thropy. That a man who had been so well received in England — the news of his visit to Ashley Grange had been duly recorded — should sink so low as "to take up with the Injins" of his own country galled their republican pride. A few of his personal friends regretted that he had not brought back from England more conservative and fashionable graces, and had not improved his opportunities. Unfortunately there was no essentially English policy of trusting aborigines that they knew of.

In his gloomy self-scrutiny he had often wondered if he ought not to openly proclaim his kinship with the despised race, but he was always deterred by the thought of his sister and her husband, as well as by the persistent doubt whether his advocacy of Indian rights with his fellow countrymen would be as well served by such a course. And here again he was perplexed by a singular incident of his early missionary efforts which he had at first treated with cold surprise, but to which later reflection had given a new significance. After Gray Eagle's revelation he had made a pilgrimage to the Indian country to verify the statements regarding his dead father, — the Indian chief Silver Cloud. Despite the confusion of tribal dialects he was amazed to find that the Indian tongue came back to him almost as a forgotten boyish memory, so that he was soon able to do without an interpreter, but not until that functionary, who knew his secret, appeared one day as a more significant ambassador. "Gray Eagle says if you want truly to be a brother to his people, you must take a wife among them. He loves you — take one of his!" Peter, through whose veins — albeit of mixed blood — ran that Puritan ice so often found throughout the Great West, was frigidly amazed. In vain did the interpreter assure him that the wife in question, Little Daybreak, was a wife only in name, a prudent reserve kept by Gray Eagle in the orphan daughter of a brother brave. But Peter was adamant. Whatever answer

the interpreter returned to Gray Eagle, he never knew. But to his alarm he presently found that the Indian maiden Little Daybreak had been aware of Gray Eagle's offer, and had with pathetic simplicity already considered herself Peter's spouse. During his stay at the encampment he found her sitting before his lodge every morning. A girl of sixteen in years, a child of six in intellect, she flashed her little white teeth upon him when he lifted his tent flap, content to receive his grave, melancholy bow, or patiently trotted at his side carrying things he did not want, which she had taken from the lodge. When he sat down to work, she remained seated at a distance, looking at him with glistening beady eyes like blackberries set in milk, and softly scratching the little bare brown ankle of one foot with the turned-in toes of the other, after an infantine fashion. Yet after he had left, — a still single man, solely through his interpreter's diplomacy, as he always believed, — he was very worried as to the wisdom of his course. Why should he not in this way ally himself to his unfortunate race irrevocably ? Perhaps there was an answer somewhere in his consciousness which he dared not voice to himself. Since his visit to the English Atherlys, he had put resolutely aside everything that related to that episode, which he now considered was an unhappy imposture. But there were times when a vision of Lady Elfrida, gazing at him with wondering, fascinated eyes, passed across his fancy; even the contact with his own race and his thoughts of their wrongs recalled to him the tomb of the soldier Atherly and the carven captive savage supporter. He could not pass the upright supported bier of an Indian brave — slowly desiccating in the desert air — without seeing in the dead warrior's paraphernalia of arms and trophies some resemblance to the cross-legged crusader on whose marble effigy *she* had girlishly perched herelf as she told the story of her ancestors. Yet only the peaceful gloom and repose of the

old church touched him now; even she, too, with all her glory of English girlhood, seemed to belong to that remote past. She was part of the restful quiet of the church; the yews in the quaint old churchyard might have waved over her as well.

Still, he was eager to see his sister, and if he should conclude to impart to her his secret, she might advise him. At all events, he decided to delay his departure until her arrival, a decision with which the commanding officer concurred, as a foraging party had that morning discovered traces of Indians in the vicinity of the fort, and the lately arrived commissary train had reported the unaccountable but promptly prevented stampede.

Unfortunately, his sister Jenny appeared accompanied by her husband, who seized an early opportunity to take Peter aside and confide to him his anxiety about her health, and the strange fits of excitement under which she occasionally labored. Remembering the episode of the Californian woods three years before, Peter stared at this good-natured, good-looking man, whose life he had always believed she once imperiled, and wondered more than ever at their strange union.

"Do you ever quarrel?" asked Peter bluntly.

"No," said the good-hearted fellow warmly, "never! We have never had a harsh word; she 's the dearest girl, — the best wife in the world to me, but" — he hesitated, "you know there are times when I think she confounds me with somebody else, and is strange! Sometimes when we are in company she stands alone and stares at everybody, without saying a word, as if she did n't understand them. Or else she gets painfully excited and dances all night until she is exhausted. I thought, perhaps," he added timidly, "that you might know, and would tell me if she had any singular experience as a child, — any illness, or," he went on still more gently, "if perhaps her mother or father" —

"No," interrupted Peter almost brusquely, with the sudden conviction that this was no time for revelation of his secret, "no, nothing."

"The doctor says," continued Lascelles with that hesitating, almost mystic delicacy with which most gentlemen approach a subject upon which their wives talk openly, "that it may be owing to Jenny's peculiar state of health just now, you know, and that if — all went well, you know, and there should be — don't you see — a little child" —

Peter interrupted him with a start. A child! Jenny's child! Silver Cloud's grandchild! This was a complication he had not thought of. No! It was too late to tell his secret now. He only nodded his head abstractedly and said coldly, "I dare say he is right."

Nevertheless, Jenny was looking remarkably well. Perhaps it was the excitement of travel and new surroundings; but her tall, lithe figure, nearly half a head taller than her husband's, was a striking one among the officers' wives in the commandant's sitting-room. Her olive cheek glowed with a faint illuminating color; there was something even patrician in her slightly curved nose and high cheek bones, and her smile, rare even in her most excited moments, was, like her brother's, singularly fascinating. The officers evidently thought so too, and when the young lieutenant of the commissary escort, fresh from West Point and Flirtation Walk, gallantly attached himself to her, the ladies were slightly scandalized at the naïve air of camaraderie with which Mrs. Lascelles received his attentions. Even Peter was a little disturbed. Only Lascelles, delighted with his wife's animation, and pleased at her success, gazed at her with unqualified admiration. Indeed, he was so satisfied with her improvement, and so sanguine of her ultimate recovery, that he felt justified in leaving her with her brother and returning to Omaha by the regular mail wagon next day. There was no danger to be apprehended in her

accompanying Peter; they would have a full escort; the reservation lay in a direction unfrequented by marauding tribes; the road was the principal one used by the government to connect the fort with the settlements, and well traveled; the officers' wives had often journeyed thither.

The childish curiosity and high spirits which Jenny showed on the journey to the reservation were increased when she reached it and drew up before the house of the Indian agent. Peter was relieved; he had been anxious and nervous as to any instinctive effect which might be produced on her excitable nature by a first view of her own kinsfolk, although she was still ignorant of her relationship. Her interest, her curiosity, however, had nothing abnormal in it. But he was not prepared for the effect produced upon *them* at her first appearance. A few of the braves gathered eagerly around her, and one even addressed her in his own guttural tongue, at which she betrayed a slight feeling of alarm; and Peter saw with satisfaction that she drew close to him. Knowing that his old interpreter and Gray Eagle were of a different and hostile tribe a hundred miles away, and that his secret was safe with them, he simply introduced her as his sister. But he presently found that the braves had added to their curiosity a certain suspiciousness and sullen demeanor, and he was glad to resign his sister into the hands of the agent's wife, while he prosecuted his business of examination and inspection. Later, on his return to the cabin, he was met by the agent, who seemed to be with difficulty suppressing a laugh.

"Your sister is exciting quite a sensation here," he said. "Do you know that some of these idiotic braves and the Medicine Man insist upon it that she 's *a squaw*, and that you're keeping her in captivity against your plighted faith to them! You 'll excuse me," he went on with an attempt to recover his gravity, "troubling you with their d—d fool talk, and you won't say anything to *her* about it, but

I thought you ought to know it on account of your position among 'em. You don't want to lose their confidence, and you know how easily their skeery faculties are stampeded with an idea!"

"Where is she now?" demanded Peter, with a darkening face.

"Somewhere with the squaws, I reckon. I thought she might be a little skeered of the braves, and I 've kept them away. *She's* all right, you know; only if you intend to stay here long, I 'd" —

But Peter was already striding away in the direction of a thicket of cottonwood where he heard the ripple of women's and children's voices. When he had penetrated it, he found his sister sitting on a stump, surrounded by a laughing, gesticulating crowd of young girls and old women, with a tightly swaddled papoose in her lap. Some of them had already half mischievously, half curiously possessed themselves of her dust cloak, hat, parasol, and gloves, and were parading before her in their grotesque finery, apparently as much to her childish excited amusement as their own. She was even answering their gesticulations with equivalent gestures in her attempt to understand them, and trying amidst shouts of laughter to respond to the monotonous chant of the old women who were zigzagging a dance before her. With the gayly striped blankets lying on the ground, the strings of beads, wampum, and highly colored feathers hanging from the trees, and the flickering lights and shadows, it was an innocent and even idyllic picture, but the more experienced Peter saw in the performances only the uncertain temper and want of consecutive idea of playing animals, and the stolid, unwinking papoose in his sister's lap gave his sentiment a momentary shock.

Seeing him approach she ran to meet him, the squaws and children slinking away from his grave face. "I have had such a funny time, Peter! Only to think of it, I be-

lieve they 've never seen men or women with decent clothes before, — of course the settlers' wives don't dress much, — and I believe they 'd have had everything I possess if you had n't come. But they 're *too* funny for anything. It was killing to see them put on my hat wrong side before, and try to make one out of my parasol. But I like them a great deal better than those gloomy chiefs, and I think I understand them almost. And do you know, Peter, somehow I seem to have known them all before. And those dear little papooses, are n't they ridiculously lovely. I only wish" — She stopped, for Peter had somewhat hurriedly taken the Indian boy from her arms and restored it to the frightened mother. A singular change came over her face, and she glanced at him quickly. But she resumed, with a heightened color, "I like it ever so much better here than down at the fort. And ever so much better than New York. I don't wonder that you like them so much, Peter, and are so devoted to them. Don't be angry, dear, because I let them have my things; I 'm sure I never cared particularly for them, and I think it would be such fun to dress as they do." Peter remembered keenly his sudden shock at her precipitate change to bright colors after leaving her novitiate at the Sacred Heart. "I do hope," she went on eagerly, "that we are going to stay a long time here."

"We are leaving to-morrow," he said curtly. "I find I have urgent business at the fort."

And they did leave. None too soon, thought Peter and the Indian agent, as they glanced at the faces of the dusky chiefs who had gathered around the cabin. Luckily the presence of their cavalry escort rendered any outbreak impossible, and the stoical taciturnity of the race kept Peter from any verbal insult. But Mrs. Lascelles noticed their lowering dissatisfaction, and her eyes flashed. "I wonder you don't punish them," she said simply.

For a few days after their return she did not allude to her visit, and Peter was beginning to think that her late impressions were as volatile as they were childlike. He devoted himself to his government report, and while he kept up his communications with the reservation and the agent, for the present domiciled himself at the fort.

Colonel Carter, the commandant, though doubtful of civilians, was not slow to appreciate the difference of playing host to a man of Atherly's wealth and position, and even found in Peter's reserve and melancholy an agreeable relief to the somewhat boisterous and material recreations of garrison life, and a gentle check upon the younger officers. For, while Peter did not gamble or drink, there was yet an unobtrusive and gentle dignity in his abstention that relieved him from the attitude of a prig or an "example." Mrs. Lascelles was popular with the officers, and accepted more tolerantly by the wives, since they recognized her harmlessness. Once or twice she was found apparently interested in the gesticulations of a few "friendlies" who had penetrated the parade ground of the fort to barter beads and wampum. The colonel was obliged at last to caution her against this, as it was found that in her inexperience she had given them certain articles that were contraband of the rules, and finally to stop them from an intrusion which was becoming more frequent and annoying. Left thus to herself, she relieved her isolation by walks beyond the precincts of the garrison, where she frequently met those "friendly" wanderers, chiefly squaws and children. Here she was again cautioned by the commander, —

"Don't put too much faith in those creatures, Mrs. Lascelles."

Jenny elevated her black brows and threw up her arched nose like a charger. "I'm not afraid of old women and children," she said loftily.

"But *I* am," said the colonel gravely. "It's a horrible

thing to think of, but these feeble old women and innocent children are always selected to torture the prisoners taken by the braves, and, by Jove, they seem to like it."

Thus restricted, Mrs. Lascelles fell back upon the attentions of Lieutenant Forsyth, whose gallantry was always as fresh as his smart cadet-like tunics, and they took some rides together. Whether it was military caution or the feminine discretion of the colonel's wife, — to the quiet amusement of the other officers, — a trooper was added to the riding party by the order of the colonel, and thereafter it consisted of three. One night, however, the riders did not appear at dinner, and there was considerable uneasiness mingled with some gossip throughout the garrison. It was already midnight before they arrived, and then with horses blown and trembling with exhaustion, and the whole party bearing every sign of fatigue and disturbance. The colonel said a few sharp, decisive words to the subaltern, who, pale and reticent, plucked at his little mustache, but took the whole blame upon himself. *He* and Mrs. Lascelles had, he said, outridden the trooper and got lost; it was late when Cassidy (the trooper) found them, but it was no fault of *his*, and they had to ride at the top of their speed to cover the ground between them and the fort. It was noticed that Mrs. Lascelles scarcely spoke to Forsyth, and turned abruptly away from the colonel's interrogations and went to her room.

Peter, absorbed in his report, scarcely noticed the incident, or the singular restraint that seemed to fall upon the little military household for a day or two afterwards. He had accepted the lieutenant's story without comment or question; he knew his own sister too well to believe that she had lent herself to a flirtation with Forsyth; indeed, he had rather pitied the young officer when he remembered Lascelles' experience in his early courtship. But he was somewhat astonished one afternoon to find the trooper Cassidy alone in his office.

"Oi thought Oi 'd make bould to have a word wid ye, sorr," he said, recovering from a stiff salute with his fingers nipping the cord of his trousers. "It 's not for meeself, sorr, although the ould man was harrd on me, nor for the leddy, your sister, but for the sake of the leftenant, sorr, who the ould man was harrdest on of all. Oi was of the parrty that rode with your sister."

"Yes, yes, I remember, I heard the story," said Peter. "She and Mr. Forsyth got lost."

"Axin' your pardin, sorr, she did n't. Mr. Forsyth loid. Loid like an officer and a jintleman — as he is, God bless him — to save a leddy, more betoken your sister, sorr. They never got lost, sorr. We was all three together from the toime we shtarted till we got back, and it 's the love av God that we ever got back at all. And it 's breakin' me hearrt, sorr, to see *him* goin' round with the black looks of everybody upon him, and he a-twirlin' his mustache and purtending not to mind."

"What do you mean?" said Peter uneasily.

"Oi mane to be tellin' you what happened, sorr," said Cassidy stoutly. "When we shtarted out Oi fell three files to the rear, as became me, so as not to be in the way o' their colloguing, but sorra a bit o' stragglin' was there, and Oi kept them afore me all the toime. When we got to Post Oak Bottom the leddy p'ints her whip off to the roight, and sez she: 'It 's a fine bit of turf there, Misther Forsyth,' invitin' like, and with that she gallops away to the right. The leftenant follys her, and Oi closed up the rear. So we rides away innoshent like amongst the trees, me thinkin' only it wor a mighty queer place for manoovrin', until we seed, just beyond us in the hollow, the smoke of an Injin camp and a lot of women and childer. And Mrs. Lascelles gets off and goes to discoursin' and blarneying wid 'em; and Oi sees Mr. Forsyth glancin' round and lookin' oneasy. Then he goes up and sez something to

your sister, and she won't give him a hearin'. And then he tells her she must mount and be off. And she turns upon him, bedad, like a tayger, and bids him be off himself. Then he comes to me and sez he, 'Oi don't like the look o' this, Cassidy,' sez he; 'the woods behind is full of braves,' sez he. 'Thrue for you, leftenant,' sez Oi, 'it 's into a trap that the leddy hez led us, God save her!' 'Whisht,' he sez, 'take my horse, it 's the strongest. Go beside her, and when Oi say the word lift her up into the saddle before ye, and gallop like blazes. Oi 'll bring up the rear and the other horse.' Wid that we changed horses and cantered up to where she was standing, and he gives the word when she is n't lookin', and Oi grabs her up — she sthrugglin' like mad but not utterin' a cry — and Oi lights out for the trail agin. And sure enough the braves made as if they would folly, but the leftenant throws the reins of her horse over the horn of his saddle, and whips out his revolver and houlds 'em back till I 've got well away to the trail again. And then they let fly their arrows, and begorra the next thing a *bullet* whizzes by him. And then he knows they have arrms wid 'em and are 'hostiles,' and he rowls the nearest one over, wheelin' and fightin' and coverin' our retreat till we gets to the road agin. And they dare n't folly us out of cover. Then the lady gets more sinsible, and the leftenant pershuades her to mount her horse agin. But before we comes to the fort, he sez to me: 'Cassidy,' sez he, 'not a word o' this on account of the leddy.' And I was mum, sorr, while he was shootin' off his mouth about him bein' lost and all that, and him bein' bully-ragged by the kernel, and me knowin' that but for him your sister would n't be between these walls here, and Oi would n't be talkin' to ye. And shure, sorr, ye might be tellin' the kernel as how the leddy was took by the hysterics, and was that loony that she did n't know whatever she was sayin', and so get the leftenant in favor again."

"I will speak with the colonel to-night," said Peter gloomily.

"Lord save yer honor," returned the trooper gratefully, "and if ye could be sayin' that the *leddy* tould you, — it would only be the merest taste of a loi ye'd be tellin', — and you'd save me from breakin' me word to the leftenant."

"I shall of course speak to my sister first," returned Peter, with a guilty consciousness that he had accepted the trooper's story mainly from his previous knowledge of his sister's character. Nevertheless, in spite of this foregone conclusion, he *did* speak to her. To his surprise she did not deny it. Lieutenant Forsyth — a vain and conceited fool, — whose silly attentions she had accepted solely that she might get recreation beyond the fort — had presumed to tell her what *she* must do! As if *she* was one of those stupid officers' wives or sisters! And it never would have happened if he — Peter — had let her remain at the reservation with the Indian agent's wife, or if "Charley" (the gentle Lascelles) were here! *He* would have let her go, or taken her there. Besides, all the while she was among friends; *his*, Peter's own friends, — the people whose cause he was championing! In vain did Peter try to point out to her that these "people" were still children in mind and impulse, and capable of vacillation or even treachery. He remembered he was talking to a child in mind and impulse, who had shown the same qualities, and in trying to convince her of her danger he felt he was only voicing the common arguments of his opponents.

He spoke also to the colonel, excusing her through her ignorance, her trust in his influence with the savages, and the general derangement of her health. The colonel, relieved of his suspicions of a promising young officer, was gentle and sympathetic, but firm as to Peter's future course. In a moment of caprice and willfulness she might

imperil the garrison as she had her escort, and, more than that, she was imperiling Peter's influence with the Indians. Absurd stories had come to his ears regarding the attitude of the reservation towards him. He thought she ought to return home as quickly as possible. Fortunately, an opportunity offered. The general commanding had advised him of the visit to the fort of a party of English tourists who had been shooting in the vicinity, and who were making the fort the farthest point of their western excursion. There were three or four ladies in the party, and as they would be returning to the line of railroad under escort, she could easily accompany them. This, added Colonel Carter, was also Mrs. Carter's opinion, — she was a woman of experience, and had a married daughter of her own. In the mean time Peter had better not broach the subject to his sister, but trust to the arrival of the strangers, who would remain for a week, and who would undoubtedly divert Mrs. Lascelles' impressible mind, and eventually make the proposition more natural and attractive.

In the interval Peter revisited the reservation, and endeavored to pacify the irritation that had sprung from his previous inspection. The outrage at Post Oak Bottom he was assured had no relation to the incident at the reservation, but was committed by some stragglers from other tribes who had not yet accepted the government bounty, yet had not been thus far classified as "hostile." There had been no "Ghost Dancing" nor other indication of disturbance. The colonel had not deemed it necessary to send out an exemplary force, or make a counter demonstration. The incident was allowed to drop. At the reservation Peter had ignored the previous conduct of the chiefs towards him; had with quiet courage exposed himself fully — unarmed and unattended — amongst them, and had as fully let it be known that this previous incident was the reason that his sister had not accompanied him on his second visit. He

left them at the close of the second day more satisfied in his mind, and perhaps in a more enthusiastic attitude towards his report.

As he came within sound of the sunset bugles, he struck a narrower trail which led to the fort, through an oasis of oaks and cottonwoods and a small stream or "branch," which afterwards lost itself in the dusty plain. He had already passed a few settlers' cabins, a sutler's shop, and other buildings that had sprung up around this armed nucleus of civilization — which, in due season, was to become a frontier town. But as yet the brief wood was wild and secluded; frequented only by the women and children of the fort, within whose protecting bounds it stood, and to whose formal "parade," and trim white and green cottage "quarters," it afforded an agreeable relief. As he rode abstractedly forward under the low cottonwood vault he felt a strange influence stealing over him, an influence that was not only a present experience, but at the same time a far-off memory. The concave vault above deepened; the sunset light from the level horizon beyond streamed through the leaves as through the checkers of stained glass windows; through the two shafts before him stretched the pillared aisles of Ashley Church! He was riding as in a dream, and when a figure suddenly slipped across his pathway from a column-like tree trunk, he woke with the disturbance and sense of unreality of a dream. For he saw Lady Elfrida standing before him!

It was not a mere memory conjured up by association, for although the figure, face, and attitude were the same, there were certain changes of costume which the eye of recollection noticed. In place of the smart, narrow-brimmed sailor hat he remembered, she was wearing a slouched cavalry hat with a gold cord around its crown, that, with all its becomingness and picturesque audacity, seemed to become characteristic and respectable, as a crest to her refined head, and as historic as a Lely canvas. She wore a flannel shirt, belted

in at her slight waist with a band of yellow leather, defining her small hips, and short, straight, pleatless skirts that fell to her trim ankles and buckled leather shoes. She was fresh and cool, wholesome and clean, free and unfettered; indeed, her beauty seemed only an afterthought or accident. So much so that when Peter saw her afterwards, amidst the billowy, gauzy, and challenging graces of the officers' wives, who were dressed in their best and prettiest frocks to welcome her, the eye turned naturally from that suggestion of enhancement to the girl who seemed to defy it. She was clearly not an idealized memory, a spirit or a ghost, but naturalistic and rosy; he thought a trifle rosier, as she laughingly addressed him.

"I suppose it is n't quite fair to surprise you like that," she said, with an honest girlish hand-shake, "for you see I know all about you now, and what you are doing here, and even when you were expected; and I dare say you thought we were still in England, if you remembered us at all. And we have n't met since that day at Ashley Church when I put my foot in it, — or rather on your pet protégé's, the Indian's: you remember Major Atherly's tomb? And to think that all the while we did n't know that you were a public man and a great political reformer, and had a fad like this. Why, we 'd have got up meetings for you, and my father would have presided, — he 's always fond of doing these things, — and we 'd have passed resolutions, and given you subscriptions, and Bibles, and flannel shirts, and revolvers — but I believe you draw the line at that. My brother was saying only the other day that you were n't half praised enough for going in for this sort of thing when you were so rich, and need n't care. And so that 's why you rushed away from Ashley Grange, — just to come here and work out your mission?"

His whole life, his first wild Californian dream, his English visit, the revelation of Gray Eagle, the final collapse of

his old beliefs, were whirling through his brain to the music of this clear young voice. And by some cruel irony of circumstance it seemed now to even mock his later dreams of expiation as it also called back his unhappy experience of the last week.

"Have you — have you" — he stammered with a faint smile, "seen my sister?"

"Not yet," said Lady Elfrida. "I believe she is not well and is confined to her room; you will introduce me, won't you?" she added eagerly. "Of course, when we heard that there was an Atherly here, we inquired about you; and I told them you were a relation of ours," she went on with a half-mischievous shyness, — "you remember the De Brecys, — and they seemed surprised and rather curious. I suppose one does not talk so much about these things over here, and I dare say you have so much to occupy your mind you don't talk of us in England." With the quickness of a refined perception she saw a slight shade in his face, and changed the subject. "And we have had such a jolly time; we have met so many pleasant people; and they 've all been so awfully good to us, from the officials and officers down to the plainest workingman. And all so naturally, too — so different from us. I sometimes think we have to work ourselves up to be civil to strangers." "No," she went on gayly, in answer to his protesting gesture, and his stammered reminder of his own reception, — "no; you came as a sort of kinsman, and Sir Edward knew all about you before he asked you down to the Grange — or even sent over for me from the Towers. No! you Americans take people on their 'face value,' as my brother Reggy says, and we always want to know what are the 'securities.' And then American men are more gallant, though," she declared mischievously, "I think you are an exception in that way. Indeed," she went on, "the more I see of your countrymen, the less you seem like them. You are more like us, — more like an English-

man; indeed, more like an Englishman than most Englishmen, — I mean in the matter of reserve and all that sort of thing, you know. It 's odd, — is n't it? Is your sister like you?"

"You shall judge for yourself," said Peter with a gayety that was forced in proportion as his forebodings became more gloomy. Would his sister's peculiarities — even her secret — be safe from the clear eyes of the young girl?

"I know I shall like her," said Lady Elfrida simply. "I mean to make friends with her before we leave, and I hope to see a great deal of her; and," she said with a naïve *non sequitur*, that, however, had its painful significance to Peter, "I do want you to show me some Indians — your Indians, you know — *your* friends. I've seen some of them, of course; I am afraid I am a little prejudiced, for I did not like them. You see my taste has to be educated, I suppose; but I thought them so foolishly vain and presuming."

"That is their perfect childishness," said Peter quickly. "It is not, I believe, considered a moral defect," he added bitterly.

Lady Elfrida laughed, and yet at the same moment a look of appeal that was in itself quite as childlike shone in her blue eyes. "There, I have blundered again, I know; but I told you I have such ridiculous prejudices! And I really want to like them as you do. Only," she laughed again, "it seems strange that *you*, of all men, should have interested yourself in people so totally different to you. But what will be the result if your efforts are successful? Will they remain a distinct race? Will you make citizens, soldiers, congressmen, governors of them? Will they intermarry with the whites? Is that a part of your plan? I hope not!"

It was a part of Peter's sensitive excitement that even through the unconscious irony of this speech he was noticing the difference between the young English girl's evident

interest in a political problem and the utter indifference of his own countrywomen. Here was a girl scarcely out of her teens, with no pretension to being a blue stocking, with half the *aplomb* of an American girl of her own age, gravely considering a question of political economy. Oddly enough, it added to his other irritation, and he said almost abruptly, "Why not?"

She took the question literally and with a little youthful timidity. "But these mixed races never attain to anything, do they? I thought that was understood. But," she added with feminine quickness, "and I suppose it 's again only a *personal* argument, *you* would n't like your sister to have married an Indian, would you?"

The irony of the situation had reached its climax to Peter. It did not seem to be his voice that said, "I can answer by an argument still more personal. I have even thought myself of marrying an Indian woman."

It seemed to him that what he said was irrevocable, but he was desperate. It seemed to him that in a moment more he would have told her his whole secret. But the young girl drew back from him with a slight start of surprise. There may have been something in the tone of his voice and in his manner that verged upon a seriousness she was never contemplating in her random talk; it may have been an uneasiness of some youthful imprudence in pressing the subject upon a man of his superiority, and that his abrupt climax was a rebuke. But it was only for a moment; her youthful buoyancy, and, above all, a certain common sense that was not incompatible to her high nature, came to her rescue. "But that," she said, with quick mischievousness, "would be a *sacrifice* taken in the interest of these people, don't you see; and being a sacrifice, it 's no argument."

Peter saw his mistake, but there was something so innocent and delightful in the youthful triumph of this red-lipped logician that he was forced to smile. I have said

that his smile was rare and fascinating, a concession wrung from his dark face and calm, beardless lips that most people found irresistible, but it was odd, nevertheless, that Lady Elfrida now for the first time felt a sudden and not altogether unpleasant embarrassment over the very subject she had approached with such innocent fearlessness. There was a new light in her eyes, a fresher color in her cheeks, as she turned her face — she knew not why — away from him. But it enabled her to see a figure approaching them from the fort. And I grieve to say that, perhaps for the first time in her life, Lady Elfrida was guilty of an affected start.

"Oh, here 's Reggy coming to look for me. I 'd quite forgotten, but I 'm so glad. I want you to know my brother Reggy. He was always so sorry he missed you at the Grange."

The tall, young, good-looking brown Englishman who had sauntered up bestowed a far more critical glance upon Peter's horse than upon Peter, but nevertheless grasped his hand heartily as his sister introduced him. Perhaps both men were equally undemonstrative, although the reserve of one was from temperament and the other from education. Nevertheless, Lord Reginald remarked, with a laugh, that it was awfully jolly to be there, and that it had been a beastly shame that he was in Scotland when Atherly was at the Grange. That none of them had ever suspected till they came to the fort that he, Atherly, was one of those government chappies, and so awfully keen on Indian politics. "Friddy" had been the first to find it out, but they thought she was chaffing. At which "Friddy," who had suddenly resolved herself into the youthfulest of schoolgirls in the presence of her brother, put her parasol like an Indian club behind her back, and still rosy, beamed admiringly upon Reggy. Then the three, Peter leading his horse, moved on towards the fort, presently meeting "Georgy,"

the six-foot Guardsman cousin in extraordinary tweeds and flannel shirt; Lord Runnybroke, uncle of Friddy, middle-aged and flannel-shirted, a mighty hunter; Lady Runnybroke, in a brown duster, but with a stately head that suggested ostrich feathers; Moyler-Spence, M. P., with an eyeglass; and the Hon. Evelyn Kayne, closely attended by the always gallant Lieutenant Forsyth. Peter began to feel a nervous longing to be alone on the burning plain and the empty horizon beyond them, until he could readjust himself to these new conditions, and glanced half wearily around him. But his eye met Friddy's, who seemed to have evoked this gathering with a wave of her parasol, like the fairy of a pantomime, and he walked on in silence.

A day or two of unexpected pleasure passed for Peter. In these new surroundings he found he could separate Lady Elfrida from his miserable past, and the conventional restraint of Ashley Grange. Again, the revelation of her familiar name Friddy seemed to make her more accessible and human to him than her formal title, and suited the girlish simplicity that lay at the foundation of her character, of which he had seen so little before. At least so he fancied, and so excused himself; it was delightful to find her referring to him as an older friend; pleasant, indeed, to see that her family tacitly recognized it, and frequently appealed to him with the introduction "Friddy says you can tell us," or "You and Friddy had better arrange it between you." Even the dreaded introduction of his sister was an agreeable surprise, owing to Lady Elfrida's frank and sympathetic prepossession, which Jenny could not resist. In a few moments they were walking together in serious and apparently confidential conversation. For to Peter's wonder it was the "Lady Elfrida" side of the English girl's nature that seemed to have attracted Jenny, and not the playfulness of "Friddy," and he was delighted to see that the young girl had assumed a grave chaperonship of the tall

Mrs. Lascelles that would have done credit to Mrs. Carter or Lady Runnybroke. Had he been less serious he might have been amused, too, at the importance of his own position in the military outpost, through the arrival of the strangers. That this grave political enthusiast and civilian should be on familiar terms with a young Englishwoman of rank was at first inconceivable to the officers. And that he had never alluded to it before seemed to them still more remarkable.

Nevertheless, there was much liveliness and good fellowship at the fort. Captains and lieutenants down to the youngest "cub," Forsyth, vied with each other to please the Englishmen, supplied them with that characteristic American humor and anecdote which it is an Englishman's privilege to bring away with him, and were picturesquely and chivalrously devoted in their attentions to the ladies, who were pleased and amused by it, though it is to be doubted if it increased their respect for the giver, although they were more grateful for it than the average American woman. Lady Elfrida found the officers very entertaining and gallant. Accustomed to the English officer, and his somewhat bored way of treating his profession and his duties, she may have been amused at the zeal, earnestness, and enthusiasm of these youthful warriors who aspired to appear as nothing but soldiers, when she contrasted them with her Guardsmen relatives who aspired to be everything else but that; but she kept it to herself. It was a recognized, respectable, and even superior occupation for gentlemen in England; what it might be in America, — who knows? She certainly found Peter, the civilian, more attractive, for there really was nothing English to compare him with, and she had something of the same feeling in her friendship for Jenny, except the patronage which Jenny seemed to solicit, and perhaps require, as a foreigner.

One afternoon the English guests, accompanied by a few

of their hosts and a small escort, were making a shooting expedition to the vicinity of Green Spring, when Peter, plunged in his report, looked up to find his sister entering his office. Her face was pale, and there was something in her expression which reawakened his old anxiety. Nevertheless, he smiled, and said gently: —

"Why are you not enjoying yourself with the others?"

"I have a headache," she said languidly; "but," lifting her eyes suddenly to his, "why are *you* not? You are their good friend, you know, — even their relation."

"No more than you are," he returned, with affected gayety. "But look at the report — it is only half finished! I have already been shirking it for them."

"You must.n't let your devotion to the Indians keep you from your older friends," said Mrs. Lascelles, with an odd laugh. "But you never told me about these people before, Peter; tell me now. They were very kind to you, were n't they, on account of your relationship?"

"Entirely on account of that," said Peter, with a sudden bitterness he could not repress. "But they are very pleasant," he added quickly, "and very simple and unaffected, in spite of their rank; perhaps I ought to say, *because* of it."

"You mean they are kind to us because they feel themselves superior, — just as you are kind to the Indians, Peter."

"I am afraid they have no such sense of political equality towards us, Jenny, as impels me to be just to the Indian," he said, with affected lightness. "But Lady Elfrida sympathizes with the Indians — very much."

"She!" The emphasis which his sister put upon the personal pronoun was unmistakable, but Peter ignored it, and so apparently did she, as she said the next moment in a different voice, "She 's very pretty, don't you think?"

"Very," said Peter coldly.

There was a long pause. Peter slightly fingered one of

the sheets of his delayed report on his desk. His sister looked up. "I 'm afraid I 'm as bad as Lady Elfrida in keeping you from your Indians; but I had something to say to you. No matter, another time will do when you 're not so busy."

"Please go on now," said Peter, with affected unconcern, yet with a feeling of uneasiness creeping over him.

"It was only this," said Jenny, seating herself with her elbow on the desk and her chin in a cup-like hollow of her hand, "did you ever think that in the interests of these poor Indians, you know, purely for the sake of your belief in them, and just to show that you were above vulgar prejudices, — did you ever think you could marry one of them?"

Two thoughts flashed quickly on Peter's mind, — first, that Lady Elfrida had repeated something of their conversation to his sister; secondly, that some one had told her of Little Daybreak. Each was equally disturbing. But he recovered himself quickly and said, "I might if I thought it was required. But even a sacrifice is not always an example."

"Then you think it would be a sacrifice?" she said, slowly raising her dark eyes to his.

"If I did something against received opinion, against precedent, and for aught I know against even the prejudices of those I wish to serve, however lofty my intention was and however great the benefit to them in the end, it would still be a sacrifice in the present." He saw his own miserable logic and affected didactics, but he went on lightly, "But why do you ask such a question? You have n't any one in your mind for me, have you?"

She had risen thoughtfully and was moving towards the door. Suddenly she turned with a quick, odd vivacity: "Perhaps I had. Oh, Peter, there was such a lovely little squaw I saw the last time I was at Oak Bottom! She was no darker than I am, but so beautiful. Even in her little

cotton gown and blanket, with only a string of beads around her throat, she was as pretty as any one here. And I dare say she could be educated and appear as well as any white woman. I should so like to have you see her. I would have tried to bring her to the fort, but the braves are very jealous of their wives or daughters seeing white men, you know, and I was afraid of the colonel."

She had spoken volubly and with a strange excitement, but even at the moment her face changed again, and as she left the office, with a quick laugh and parting gesture, there were tears in her eyes.

Accustomed to her moods and caprices, Peter thought little of the intrusion, relieved as he was of his first fears. She had come to him from loneliness and curiosity, and, perhaps, he thought with a sad smile, from a little sisterly jealousy of the young girl who had evinced such an interest in him, and had known him before. He took up his pen and continued the interrupted paragraph of his report.

"I am satisfied that much of the mischievous and extravagant prejudice against the half-breed and all alliances of the white and red races springs from the ignorance of the frontiersman and his hasty generalization of facts. There is no doubt that an intermixture of blood brings out purely superficial contrasts the more strongly, and that against the civilizing habits and even costumes of the half-breed, certain Indian defects appear the more strongly as in the case of the color line of the quadroon and octoroon, but it must not be forgotten that these are only the contrasts of specific improvement, and the inference that the borrowed defects of a half-breed exceed the original defects of the full-blooded aborigine is utterly illogical." He stopped suddenly and laid down his pen with a heightened color; the bugle had blown, the guard was turning out to receive the commandant and his returning party, among whom was Friddy.

. . . . . .

Through the illusions of depression and distance the "sink" of Butternut Creek seemed only an incrustation of blackish moss on the dull gray plain. It was not until one approached within half a mile of it that it resolved itself into a copse of butternut-trees sunken below the distant levels. Here once, in geological story, the waters of Butternut Creek, despairing of ever crossing the leagues of arid waste before them, had suddenly disappeared in the providential interposition of an area of looser soil, and so given up the effort and the ghost forever, their grave being marked by the butternut copse, chance-sown by bird or beast in the saturated ground. In Indian legend the "sink" commemorated the equally providential escape of a great tribe who, surrounded by enemies, appealed to the Great Spirit for protection, and were promptly conveyed by subterraneous passages to the banks of the Great River a hundred miles away. Its outer edges were already invaded by the dust of the plain, but within them ran cool recesses, a few openings, and the ashes of some long-forgotten camp-fires. To-day its sombre shadows were relieved by bright colored dresses, the jackets of the drivers of a large sutler's wagon, whose white canvas head marked the entrance of the copse, and all the paraphernalia of a picnic. It was a party gotten up by the foreign guests to the ladies of the fort, prepared and arranged by the active Lady Elfrida, assisted by the only gentleman of the party, Peter Atherly, who, from his acquaintance with the locality, was allowed to accompany them. The other gentlemen, who with a large party of officers and soldiers were shooting in the vicinity, were sufficiently near for protection. They would rejoin the ladies later.

"It does not seem in the least as if we were miles away from any town or habitation," said Lady Runnybroke, complacently seating herself on a stump, "and I should n't be surprised to see a church tower through those trees. It 's

very like the hazel copse at Longworth, you know. Not at all what I expected."

"For the matter of that, neither are the Indians," said the Hon. Evelyn Kayne. "Did you ever see such grotesque creatures in their cast-off boots and trousers? They 're no better than gypsies. I wonder what Mr. Atherly can find in them."

"And he a rich man, too, — they say he 's got a mine in California worth a million, — to take up a craze like this," added the lively Mrs. Captain Joyce; "that 's what gets me! You know," she went on confidentially, "that cranks and reformers are always poor — it 's quite natural; but I don't see what he, a rich man, expects to make by his reforms, I 'm sure."

"He 'll get over it in time," said the Hon. Evelyn Kayne, "they all do. At least, he expects to get the reforms he wants in a year, and then he 's coming over to England again."

"Indeed, how very nice," responded Lady Runnybroke quickly. "Did he say so?"

"No. But Friddy says he is."

The two officers' wives glanced at each other. Lady Runnybroke put up her eyeglass in default of ostrich feathers, and said didactically, "I 'm sure Mr. Atherly is very much in earnest and sincerely devoted to his work. And in a man of his wealth and position here it 's most estimable. My dear," she said, getting up and moving towards Mrs. Lascelles, "we were just saying how good and unselfish your brother was in his work for these poor people."

But Jenny Lascelles must have been in one of those abstracted moods which so troubled her husband, for she seemed to be staring straight before her into the recesses of the wood. In her there was a certain resemblance to the attitude of a listening animal.

"I wish Mr. Atherly was a little more unselfish to *us*

poor people," said the Hon. Evelyn Kayne, "for he and Friddy have been nearly an hour looking for a place to spread our luncheon baskets. I wish they 'd leave the future of the brown races to look after itself, and look a little more after us. I 'm famished."

"I fancy they find it difficult to select a clear space for so large a party as we will be when the gentlemen come in," returned Lady Runnybroke, glancing in the direction of Jenny's abstracted eyes.

"I suppose you must feel like chicken and salad, too, Lady Runnybroke," suggested Mrs. Captain Joyce.

"I don't think I quite know *how* chicken and salad feel, dear," said Lady Runnybroke, with a puzzled air, "but if that 's one of your husband's delightful American stories, do tell us. I never *can* get Runnybroke to tell me any, although he roars over them all. And I dare say he gets them all wrong. But look, here comes our luncheon."

Peter and Lady Elfrida were advancing towards them. The scrutiny of a dozen pairs of eyes — wondering, mischievous, critical, impertinent, or resentful — would have been a trying ordeal to any errant couple; but there was little if any change in Peter's grave and gentle demeanor, albeit his dark eyes were shining with a peculiar light, and Lady Elfrida had only the animation, color, and slight excitability that became the responsible leader of the little party. They neither apologized nor alluded to their delay. They had selected a spot on the other side of the copse, and the baskets could be sent around by the wagon; they had seen a slight haze on the plain towards the east which betokened the vicinity of the rest of the party, and they were about to propose that as the gentlemen were so near they had better postpone the picnic until they came up. Lady Runnybroke smiled affably; the only thing she had noticed was that Lady Elfrida in joining them had gone directly to the side of the abstracted Jenny, and placed her

arm around her waist. At which Lady Runnybroke airily joined them.

The surmises of Peter and Friddy appeared to be correct. The transfer of the provisions and the party to the other side was barely concluded before they could see the gentlemen coming; they were riding a little more rapidly than when they had set out, and were arriving fully three hours before their time. They burst upon the ladies a little boisterously but gayly; they had had a glorious time, but little sport; they had hurried back to join the ladies so as to be able to return with them betimes. They were ravenously hungry; they wanted to fall to at once. Only the officers' wives noticed that the two files of troopers *did not dismount*, but filed slowly before the entrance to the woods. Lady Elfrida as hostess was prettily distressed by it, but was told by Captain Joyce that it was "against rules," and that she could "feed" them at the fort. The officers' wives put a few questions in whispers, and were promptly frowned down. Nevertheless, the luncheon was a successful festivity: the gentlemen were loud in the praises of their gracious hostess; the delicacies she had provided by express from distant stations, and much that was distinctly English and despoiled from her own stores, were gratefully appreciated by the officers of a remote frontier garrison. Lady Elfrida's health was toasted by the gallant colonel in a speech that was the soul of chivalry. Lord Runnybroke responded, perhaps without the American abandon, but with the steady conscientiousness of an hereditary legislator, but the M. P. summed up a slightly exaggerated but well-meaning episode by pointing out that it was on occasions like this that the two nations showed their common ancestry by standing side by side. Only one thing troubled the rosy, excited, but still clear-headed Friddy; the plates were whisked away like magic after each delicacy, by the military servants, and vanished; the tables were in the same

mysterious way cleared as rapidly as they were set, and any attempt to recall a dish was met by the declaration that it was already packed away in the wagon. As they at last rose from the actually empty board, and saw even the tables disappear, Lady Elfrida plaintively protested that she felt as if she had been presiding over an Arabian Nights entertainment, served by genii, and she knew that they would all awaken hungry when they were well on their way back. Nevertheless, in spite of this expedition, the officers lounged about smoking until every trace of the festivity had vanished. Reggy found himself standing near Peter. "You know," he said confidentially, "I don't think the colonel has a very high opinion of your pets, — the Indians. And, by Jove, if the 'friendlies' are as nasty towards you as they were to us this morning, I wonder what you call the 'hostile' tribes."

"Did you have any difficulty with them?" said Peter quickly.

"No, not exactly, don't you know, — we were too many, I fancy; but, by Jove, the beggars whenever we met them, — and we met one or two gypsy bands of them, — you know, they seemed to look upon us as *trespassers*, don't you know."

"And you were, in point of fact," said Peter, smiling grimly.

"Oh, I say, come now!" said Reggy, opening his eyes. After a moment he laughed. "Oh, yes, I see — of course, looking at it from their point of view. By Jove, I dare say the beggars were right, you know; all the same, — don't you see, — *your* people were poaching, too."

"So we were," said Peter gravely.

But here, at a word from the major, the whole party debouched from the woods. Everything appeared to be awaiting them, — the large covered carryall for the guests, and two saddle horses for Mrs. Lascelles and Lady Elfrida,

who had ridden there together. Peter, also mounted, accompanied the carryall with two of the officers; the troopers and wagons brought up the rear.

It was very hot, with little or no wind. On this part of the plain the dust seemed lighter and finer, and rose with the wheels of the carryall and the horses of the escort, trailing a white cloud over the cavalcade like the smoke of an engine over a train. It was with difficulty the troopers could be kept from opening out on both sides of the highway to escape it. The whole atmosphere seemed charged with it; it even appeared in a long bank to the right, rising and obscuring the declining sun. But they were already within sight of the fort and the little copse beside it. Then trooper Cassidy trotted up to the colonel, who was riding in a dusty cloud beside the carryall, "Captain Fleetwood's compliments, sorr, and there are two sthragglers, — Mrs. Lascelles and the English lady." He pointed to the rapidly flying figures of Jenny and Friddy making towards the wood.

The colonel made a movement of impatience. "Tell Mr. Forsyth to bring them back at once," he said.

But here a feminine chorus of excuses and expostulations rose from the carryall. "It 's only Mrs. Lascelles going to show Friddy where the squaws and children bathe," said Lady Runnybroke; "it 's near the fort, and they 'll be there as quick as we shall."

"One moment, colonel," said Peter, with mortified concern. "It 's another folly of my sister's! pray let me take it upon myself to bring them back."

"Very well, but see you don't linger, and," turning to Cassidy, as Peter galloped away, he added, "you follow him."

Peter kept the figures of the two women in view, but presently saw them disappear in the wood. He had no fear for their safety, but he was indignant at this last untimely caprice of his sister. He knew the idea had originated with

her, and that the officers knew it, and yet she had made Lady Elfrida bear an equal share of the blame. He reached the edge of the copse, entered the first opening, but he had scarcely plunged into its shadow and shut out the plain behind him before he felt his arms and knees quickly seized from behind. So sudden and unexpected was the attack that he first thought his horse had stumbled against a coil of wild grapevine and was entangled, but the next moment he smelled the rank, characteristic odor and saw the brown limbs of the Indian who had leaped on his crupper, while another rose at his horse's head. Then a warning voice in his ear said in the native tongue : —

"If the great white medicine man calls to his fighting men, the pale-face girl and the squaw he calls his sister die! They are here, he understands."

But Peter had neither struggled nor uttered a cry. At that touch, and with the accents of that tongue in his ears, all his own Indian blood seemed to leap and tingle through his veins. His eyes flashed ; pinioned as he was, he drew himself erect and answered haughtily in his captor's own speech : —

"Good! The great white medicine man obeys, for he and his sister have no fear. But if the pale-face girl is not sent back to her people before the sun sets, then the yellow jackets will swarm the woods, and they will follow her trail to the death. My brother is wise; let the girl go. I have spoken."

"My brother is very cunning, too. He would call to his fighting men through the lips of the pale-face girl."

"He will not. The great white medicine man does not lie to his red brother. He will tell the pale-face girl to say to the chief of the yellow jackets that he and his sister are with his brothers, and all is peace. But the pale-face girl must not see the great white medicine man in these bonds, nor as a captive! I have spoken."

The two Indians fell back. There was so much of force and dignity in the man, so much of their own stoic calmness, that they at once mechanically loosened the thongs of plaited deer hide with which they had bound him, and side by side led him into the recesses of the wood.

. . . . . .

There was some astonishment, although little alarm, at the fort, when Lady Elfrida returned accompanied by the orderly who had followed Peter to the wood, but without Peter and his sister. The reason given was perfectly natural and conceivable. Mrs. Lascelles had preceded Lady Elfrida in entering the wood and taken another opening, so that Lady Elfrida had found herself suddenly lost, and surrounded by two or three warriors in dreadful paint. They motioned her to dismount, and said something she did not understand, but she declined, knowing that she had heard Mr. Atherly and the orderly following her, and feeling no fear. And sure enough Mr. Atherly presently came up with a couple of braves, apologized to her for their mistake, but begged her to return to the fort at once and assure the colonel that everything was right, and that he and his sister were safe. He was perfectly cool and collected and like himself; she blushed slightly, as she said she thought that he wished to impress upon her, for some reason she could not understand, that he did not want the colonel to send any assistance. She was positive of that. She told her story unexcitedly; it was evident that she had not been frightened, but Lady Runnybroke noticed that there was a shade of anxious abstraction in her face.

When the officers were alone, the colonel took hurried counsel of them. "I think," said Captain Fleetwood, "that Lady Elfrida's story quite explains itself. I believe this affair is purely a local one, and has nothing whatever to do with the suspicious appearances we noticed this afternoon, or the presence of so large a body of Indians near

Butternut. Had this been a hostile movement they would scarcely have allowed so valuable a capture as Lady Elfrida to escape them."

"Unless they kept Atherly and his sister as hostages," said Captain Joyce.

"But Atherly is one of their friends; indeed, he is their mediator and apostle, a non-combatant, and has their confidence," returned the colonel. "It is much more reasonable to suppose that Atherly has noticed some disaffection among these 'friendlies,' and he fears that our sending a party to his assistance might precipitate a collision. Or he may have reason to believe that this stopping of the two women under the very walls of the fort is only a feint to draw our attention from something more serious. Did he know anything of our suspicions of the conduct of those Indians this morning?"

"Not unless he gathered it from what Lord Reginald foolishly told him. We said nothing, of course," returned Captain Fleetwood, with a soldier's habitual distrust of the wisdom of the civil arm.

"That will do, gentlemen," said the colonel, as the officers dispersed; "send Cassidy here."

The colonel was alone on the veranda as Cassidy came up.

"You followed Mr. Atherly to-day?"

"Yes, sorr."

"And you saw him when he gave the message to the young lady?"

"Yes, sorr."

"Did you form any opinion from anything else you saw, of his object in sending that message?"

"Only from what I saw of *him*."

"Well, what was that?"

"I saw him look afther the young leddy as she rode away, and then wheel about and go straight back into the wood."

"And what did you think of that?" said the colonel, with a half smile.

"I thought it was shacrifice, sorr."

"What do you mean?" said the colonel sharply.

"I mane, sorr," said Cassidy stoutly, "that he was givin' up hisself and his sister for that young leddy."

The colonel looked at the sergeant. "Ask Mr. Forsyth to come to me privately, and return here with him."

As darkness fell, some half a dozen dismounted troopers, headed by Forsyth and Cassidy, passed quietly out of the lower gate and entered the wood. An hour later the colonel was summoned from the dinner table, and the guests heard the quick rattle of a wagon turning out of the road gate — but the colonel did not return. An indefinable uneasiness crept over the little party, which reached its climax in the summoning of the other officers, and the sudden flashing out of news. The reconnoitring party had found the dead bodies of Peter Atherly and his sister on the plains at the edge of the empty wood.

The women were gathered in the commandant's quarters, and for the moment seemed to have been forgotten. The officers' wives talked with professional sympathy and disciplined quiet; the English ladies were equally sympathetic, but collected. Lady Elfrida, rather white, but patient, asked a few questions in a voice whose contralto was rather deepened. One and all wished to "do something" — anything "to help" — and one and all rebelled that the colonel had begged them to remain within doors. There was an occasional quick step on the veranda, or the clatter of a hoof on the parade, a continued but subdued murmur from the whitewashed barracks, but everywhere a sense of keen restraint.

When they emerged on the veranda again, the whole aspect of the garrison seemed to have changed in that brief time. In the faint moonlight they could see motionless

files of troopers filling the parade, the officers in belted tunics and slouched hats — but apparently not the same men; the half-lounging ease and lazy dandyism gone, a grim tension in all their faces, a set abstraction in all their acts. Then there was the rolling of heavy wheels in the road, and the two horses of the ambulance appeared. The sentries presented arms; the colonel took off his hat; the officers uncovered; the wagon wheeled into the parade; the surgeon stepped out. He exchanged a single word with the colonel, and lifted the curtain of the ambulance.

As the colonel glanced within, a deep but embarrassed voice fell upon his ear. He turned quickly. It was Lord Reginald, flushed and sympathetic.

"He was a friend, — a relation of ours, you know," he stammered. "My sister would like — to look at him again."

"Not now," said the colonel, in a low voice. The surgeon added something in a voice still lower, which scarcely reached the veranda.

Lord Reginald turned away with a white face.

"Fall back there!" Captain Fleetwood rode up.

"All ready, sir."

"One moment, captain," said the colonel quietly. "File your first half company before that ambulance, and bid the men look in."

The singular order was obeyed. The men filed slowly forward, each in turn halting before the motionless wagon and its immobile freight. They were men inured to frontier bloodshed and savage warfare; some halted and hurried on; others lingered, others turned to look again. One man burst into a short laugh, but when the others turned indignantly upon him, they saw that in his face that held them in awe. What they saw in the ambulance did not transpire; what they felt was not known. Strangely enough, however, what they repressed themselves was mysteriously communicated

to their horses, who snorted and quivered with eagerness and impatience as they rode back again. The horse of the trooper who had laughed almost leaped into the air. Only Sergeant Cassidy was communicative; he took a larger circuit in returning to his place, and managed to lean over and whisper hoarsely in the ear of a camp follower spectator, "Tell the young leddy that the torturin' divvils could n't take the smile off him!"

The little column filed out of the gateway into the road. As Captain Fleetwood passed Colonel Carter, the two men's eyes met. The colonel said quietly, "Good-night, captain. Let us have a good report from you."

The captain replied only with his gauntleted hand against the brim of his slouched hat, but the next moment his voice was heard strong and clear enough in the road. The little column trotted away as evenly as on parade. But those who climbed the roof of the barracks a quarter of an hour later saw, in the moonlight, a white cloud drifting rapidly across the plain towards the west. It was a small cloud in that bare, menacing, cruel, and illimitable waste; but in its breast was crammed a thunderbolt.

It fell thirty miles away, blasting and scattering a thousand warriors and their camp, giving and taking no quarter, vengeful, exterminating, and complete. Later, there were different opinions about it and the horrible crime that had provoked it: the opposers of Peter's policy jubilant over the irony of the assassination of the Apostle of Peace, Peter's disciples as actively deploring the merciless and indiscriminating vengeance of the military; and so the problem that Peter had vainly attempted to solve was left an open question. There were those, too, who believed that Peter had never sacrificed himself and his sister for the sake of another, but had provoked and incensed the savages by the blind arrogance of a reformer. There were wild stories by scouts and interpreters how he had challenged

his fate by an Indian bravado; how himself and his sister had met torture with an Indian stoicism, and how the Indian braves themselves at last in a turmoil of revulsion had dipped their arrows and lances in the heroic heart's blood of their victims, and worshiped their still palpitating flesh.

But there was one honest, loyal little heart that carried back — three thousand miles — to England the man as it had known and loved him. Lady Elfrida Runnybroke never married; neither did she go into retirement, but lived her life and fulfilled her duties in her usual clear-eyed fashion. She was particularly kind to all Americans, — barring, I fear, a few pretty faced, finely frocked title-hunters, — told stories of the Far West, and had theories of a people of which they knew little, cared less, and believed to be vulgar. But I think she found a new pleasure in the old church at Ashley Grange, and loved to linger over the effigy of the old Crusader, — her kinsman, the swashbuckler De Brecy, — with a vague but pretty belief that devotion and love do not die with brave men, but live and flourish even in lands beyond the seas.

THE PASSING OF ENRIQUEZ

WHEN Enriquez Saltillo ran away with Miss Mannersley, as already recorded in these chronicles,[1] her relatives and friends found it much easier to forgive that ill-assorted union than to understand it. For, after all, Enriquez was the scion of an old Spanish-Californian family, and in due time would have his share of his father's three square leagues, whatever incongruity there was between his lively Latin extravagance and Miss Mannersley's Puritan precision and intellectual superiority. They had gone to Mexico; Mrs. Saltillo, as was known, having an interest in Aztec antiquities, and he being utterly submissive to her wishes. For myself, from my knowledge of Enriquez's nature, I had grave doubts of his entire subjugation, although I knew the prevailing opinion was that Mrs. Saltillo's superiority would speedily tame him. Since his brief and characteristic note apprising me of his marriage, I had not heard from him. It was, therefore, with some surprise, a good deal of reminiscent affection, and a slight twinge of reproach that, two years after, I looked up from some proofs, in the sanctum of the "Daily Excelsior," to recognize his handwriting on a note that was handed to me by a yellow Mexican boy.

A single glance at its contents showed me that Mrs. Saltillo's correct Bostonian speech had not yet subdued Enriquez's peculiar Spanish-American slang: —

"Here we are again, — right side up with care, — at 1110 Dupont Street, Telegraph Hill. Second floor from top. 'Ring and push.' 'No book agents need apply.'

[1] See "The Devotion of Enriquez," in *In a Hollow of the Hills and Other Tales.*

How 's your royal nibs? I kiss your hand! Come at six, — the band shall play at seven, — and regard your friend 'Mees Boston,' who will tell you about the little old nigger boys, and your old Uncle 'Ennery."

Two things struck me: Enriquez had not changed; Mrs. Saltillo had certainly yielded up some of her peculiar prejudices. For the address given, far from being a fashionable district, was known as the "Spanish quarter," which, while it still held some old Spanish families, was chiefly given over to half-castes and obscurer foreigners. Even poverty could not have driven Mrs. Saltillo to such a refuge against her will; nevertheless, a good deal of concern for Enriquez's fortune mingled with my curiosity, as I impatiently waited for six o'clock to satisfy it.

It was a breezy climb to 1110 Dupont Street; and although the street had been graded, the houses retained their airy elevation, and were accessible only by successive flights of wooden steps to the front door, which still gave perilously upon the street, sixty feet below. I now painfully appreciated Enriquez's adaptation of the time-honored joke about the second floor. An invincible smell of garlic almost took my remaining breath away as the door was opened to me by a swarthy Mexican woman, whose loose *camisa* seemed to be slipping from her unstable bust, and was held on only by the mantua-like shawl which supplemented it, gripped by one brown hand. Dizzy from my ascent to that narrow perch, which looked upon nothing but the distant bay and shores of Contra Costa, I felt as apologetic as if I had landed from a balloon; but the woman greeted me with a languid Spanish smile and a lazy display of white teeth, as if my arrival was quite natural. Don Enriquez, "of a fact," was not himself in the *casa*, but was expected "on the instant." "Donna Urania" was at home.

"Donna Urania"? For an instant I had forgotten

that Mrs. Saltillo's first name was Urania, so pleasantly and spontaneously did it fall from the Spanish lips. Nor was I displeased at this chance of learning something of Don Enriquez's fortunes and the Saltillo ménage before confronting my old friend. The servant preceded me to the next floor, and, opening a door, ushered me into the lady's presence.

I had carried with me, on that upward climb, a lively recollection of Miss Mannersley as I had known her two years before. I remembered her upright, almost stiff, slight figure, the graceful precision of her poses, the faultless symmetry and taste of her dress, and the atmosphere of a fastidious and wholesome cleanliness which exhaled from her. In the lady I saw before me, half reclining in a rocking-chair, there was none of the stiffness and nicety. Habited in a loose gown of some easy, flexible, but rich material, worn with that peculiarly indolent slouch of the Mexican woman, Mrs. Saltillo had parted with half her individuality. Even her arched feet and thin ankles, the close-fitting boots or small slippers of which were wont to accent their delicacy, were now lost in a short, low-quartered kid shoe of the Spanish type, in which they moved loosely. Her hair, which she had always worn with a certain Greek simplicity, was parted at one side. Yet her face, with its regularity of feature, and small, thin, red-lipped mouth, was quite unchanged; and her velvety brown eyes were as beautiful and inscrutable as ever.

With the same glance I had taken in her surroundings, quite as incongruous to her former habits. The furniture, though of old and heavy mahogany, had suffered from careless alien hands, and was interspersed with modern and unmatchable makeshifts, yet preserving the distinctly scant and formal attitude of furnished lodgings. It was certainly unlike the artistic trifles and delicate refinements of her uncle's drawing-room, which we all knew her taste had

dictated and ruled. The black and white engravings, the outlined heads of Minerva and Diana, were excluded from the walls for two cheap colored Catholic prints, — a soulless Virgin, and the mystery of the Bleeding Heart. Against the wall, in one corner, hung the only object which seemed a memento of their travels, — a singular-looking upright Indian "papoose-case" or cradle, glaringly decorated with beads and paint, probably an Aztec relic. On a round table, the velvet cover of which showed marks of usage and abusage, there were scattered books and writing materials; and my editorial instinct suddenly recognized, with a thrill of apprehension, the loose leaves of an undoubted manuscript. This circumstance, taken with the fact of Donna Urania's hair being parted on one side, and the general negligée of her appearance, was a disturbing revelation.

My wandering eye apparently struck her, for after the first greeting she pointed to the manuscript with a smile.

"Yes; that is *the* manuscript. I suppose Enriquez told you all about it? He said he had written."

I was dumfounded. I certainly had not understood *all* of Enriquez's slang; it was always so decidedly his own, and peculiar. Yet I could not recall any allusion to this.

"He told me something of it, but very vaguely," I ventured to say deprecatingly; "but I am afraid that I thought more of seeing my old friend again than of anything else."

"During our stay in Mexico," continued Mrs. Saltillo, with something of her old precision, "I made some researches into Aztec history, a subject always deeply interesting to me, and I thought I would utilize the result by throwing it on paper. Of course it is better fitted for a volume of reference than for a newspaper, but Enriquez thought you might want to use it for your journal."

I knew that Enriquez had no taste for literature, and had even rather depreciated it in the old days, with his

usual extravagance; but I managed to say very pleasantly that I was delighted with his suggestion and should be glad to read the manuscript. After all, it was not improbable that Mrs. Saltillo, who was educated and intelligent, should write well, if not popularly. "Then Enriquez does not begrudge you the time that your work takes from him," I added laughingly. "You seem to have occupied your honeymoon practically."

"We quite comprehend our respective duties," said Mrs. Saltillo dryly; "and have from the first. We have our own lives to live, independent of my uncle and Enriquez's father. We have not only accepted the responsibility of our own actions, but we both feel the higher privilege of creating our own conditions without extraneous aid from our relatives."

It struck me that this somewhat exalted statement was decidedly a pose, or a return of Urania Mannersley's old ironical style. I looked quietly into her brown, near-sighted eyes; but, as once before, my glance seemed to slip from their moist surface without penetrating the inner thought beneath. "And what does Enriquez do for *his* part?" I asked smilingly.

I fully expected to hear that the energetic Enriquez was utilizing his peculiar tastes and experiences by horsebreaking, stock-raising, professional bull-fighting, or even horse-racing, but was quite astonished when she answered quietly: —

"Enriquez is giving himself up to geology and practical metallurgy, with a view to scientific, purely scientific, mining."

Enriquez and geology! In that instant all I could remember of it were his gibes at the "geologian," as he was wont to term Professor Dobbs, a former admirer of Miss Mannersley's. To add to my confusion, Mrs. Saltillo at the same moment absolutely voiced my thought.

"You may remember Professor Dobbs," she went on calmly, "one of the most eminent scientists over here, and

a very old Boston friend. He has taken Enriquez in hand. His progress is most satisfactory; we have the greatest hopes of him."

"And how soon do you both hope to have some practical results of his study?" I could not help asking a little mischievously; for I somehow resented the plural pronoun in her last sentence.

"Very soon," said Mrs. Saltillo, ignoring everything but the question. "You know Enriquez's sanguine temperament. Perhaps he is already given to evolving theories without a sufficient basis of fact. Still, he has the daring of a discoverer. His ideas of the oölitic formation are not without originality, and Professor Dobbs says that in his conception of the Silurian beach there are gleams that are distinctly precious."

I looked at Mrs. Saltillo, who had reinforced her eyes with her old piquant *pince-nez*, but could detect no irony in them. She was prettily imperturbable, that was all. There was an awkward silence. Then it was broken by a bounding step on the stairs, a wide-open fling of the door, and Enriquez pirouetted into the room: Enriquez, as of old, unchanged from the crown of his smooth, coal-black hair to the tips of his small, narrow Arabian feet; Enriquez, with his thin, curling mustache, his dancing eyes set in his immovable face, just as I had always known him!

He affected to lapse against the door for a minute, as if staggered by a resplendent vision. Then he said: —

"What do I regard? Is it a dream, or have I again got them — thees jimjams? My best friend and my best — I mean my *only* — wife! Embrace me!"

He gave me an enthusiastic embrace and a wink like sheet-lightning, passed quickly to his wife, before whom he dropped on one knee, raised the toe of her slipper to his lips, and then sank on the sofa in simulated collapse, murmuring, "Thees is too mooch of white stone for one day!"

Through all this I saw his wife regarding him with exactly the same critically amused expression with which she had looked upon him in the days of their strange courtship. She evidently had not tired of his extravagance, and yet I feel as puzzled by her manner as then. She rose and said: "I suppose you have a good deal to say to each other, and I will leave you by yourselves." Turning to her husband, she added, "I have already spoken about the Aztec manuscript."

The word brought Enriquez to his feet again. "Ah! The leetle old nigger — you have read?" I began to understand. "My wife, my best friend, and the leetle old nigger, all in one day. Eet is perfect!" Nevertheless, in spite of this ecstatic and overpowering combination, he hurried to take his wife's hand; kissing it, he led her to a door opening into another room, made her a low bow to the ground as she passed out, and then rejoined me.

"So these are the little old niggers you spoke of in your note," I said, pointing to the manuscript. "Deuce take me if I understood you!"

"Ah, my leetle brother, it is *you* who have changed!" said Enriquez dolorously. "Is it that you no more understand American, or have the 'big head' of the editor? Regard me! Of these Aztecs my wife have made study. She have pursued the leetle nigger to his cave, his grotto, where he is dead a thousand year. I have myself assist, though I like it not, because thees mummy, look you, Pancho, is not lively. And the mummy who is not dead, believe me! even the young lady mummy, you shall not take to your heart. But my wife" — he stopped, and kissed his hand toward the door whence she had flitted — "ah, *she* is wonderful! She has made the story of them, the peecture of them, from the life and on the instant! You shall take them, my leetle brother, for your journal; you shall announce in the big letter: 'Mooch Importance. The Aztec, He is Found.' 'How

He Look and Lif.' 'The Everlasting Nigger.' You shall sell many paper, and Urania shall have scoop in much spondulics and rocks. Hoop-la! For — you comprehend? — my wife and I have settled that she shall forgif her oncle; I shall forgif my father; but from them we take no cent, not a red, not a scad! We are independent! Of ourselves we make a Fourth of July. United we stand; divided we shall fall over! There you are! *Bueno!*"

It was impossible to resist his wild, yet perfectly sincere extravagance, his dancing black eyes and occasional flash of white teeth in his otherwise immovable and serious countenance. Nevertheless, I managed to say: —

"But how about yourself, Enriquez, and this geology, you know?"

His eyes twinkled. "Ah, you shall hear. But first you shall take a drink. I have the very old Bourbon. He is not so old as the Aztec, but, believe me, he is very much liflier. Attend! Hol' on!" He was already rummaging on a shelf, but apparently without success; then he explored a buffet, with no better results, and finally attacked a large drawer, throwing out on the floor, with his old impetuosity, a number of geological specimens, carefully labeled. I picked up one that had rolled near me. It was labeled "Conglomerate sandstone." I picked up another: it had the same label.

"Then you are really collecting?" I said, with astonishment.

"*Ciertamente*," responded Enriquez, — "what other fool shall I look? I shall relate of this geology when I shall have found this beast of a bottle. Ah, here he have hide!" He extracted from a drawer a bottle nearly full of spirits, — tippling was not one of Enriquez's vices. "You shall say 'when.' 'Ere 's to our noble selfs!"

When he had drunk, I picked up another fragment of his collection. It had the same label. "You are very rich

in 'conglomerate sandstone,'" I said. "Where do you find it?"

"In the street," said Enriquez, with great calmness.

"In the street?" I echoed.

"Yes, my friend! He ees call the 'cobblestone,' also the 'pouding-stone,' when he ees at his home in the country. He ees also a small 'boulder.' I pick him up; I crack him; he made three separate piece of conglomerate sandstone. I bring him home to my wife in my pocket. She rejoice; we are happy. When comes the efening, I sit down and make him a label; while my wife, she sit down and write of the Aztec. Ah, my friend, you shall say of the geology it ees a fine, a *beautiful* study; but the study of the wife, and what shall please her, believe me, ees much finer! Believe your old Uncle 'Ennery every time! On thees question he gets there; he gets left, nevarre!"

"But Professor Dobbs, your geologian, what does *he* say to this frequent recurrence of the conglomerate sandstone period in your study?" I asked quickly.

"He say nothing. You comprehend? He ees a profound geologian, but he also has the admiration excessif for my wife Urania." He stopped to kiss his hand again toward the door, and lighted a cigarette. "The geologian would not that he should break up the happy efening of his friends by thees small detail. He put aside his head — so; he say, 'A leetle freestone, a leetle granite, now and then, for variety; they are building in Montgomery Street.' I take the hint, like a wink to the horse that has gone blind. I attach to myself part of the edifice that is erecting himself in Montgomery Street. I crack him; I bring him home. I sit again at the feet of my beautiful Urania, and I label him 'Freestone,' 'Granite;' but I do not say 'from Parrott's Bank' — eet is not necessary for our happiness."

"And you do this sort of thing only because you think it pleases your wife?" I asked bluntly.

"My friend," rejoined Enriquez, perching himself on the back of the sofa, and caressing his knees as he puffed his cigarette meditatively, "you have ask a conundrum. Gif to me an easier one! It is of truth that I make much of these things to please Urania. But I shall confess all. Behold, I appear to you, my leetle brother, in my *camisa* — my shirt! I blow on myself; I gif myself away."

He rose gravely from the sofa, and drew a small box from one of the drawers of the wardrobe. Opening it, he discovered several specimens of gold-bearing quartz, and one or two scales of gold. "Thees," he said, "friend Pancho, is my own geology; for thees I am what you see. But I say nothing to Urania; for she have much disgust of mere gold, — of what she calls 'vulgar mining,' — and believe me, a fear of the effect of 'speculation' upon my *temperamento* — you comprehend my complexion, my brother? Reflect upon it, Pancho! *I*, who am the *filosofo*, if that I am anything!" He looked at me with great levity of eye and supernatural gravity of demeanor. "But eet ees the jealous affection of the wife, my friend, for which I make play to her with the humble leetle pouding-stone rather than the gold quartz that affrights."

"But what do you want with them, if you have no shares in anything and do not speculate?" I asked.

"Pardon! That ees where you slip up, my leetle friend." He took from the same drawer a clasped portfolio, and unlocked it, producing half a dozen prospectuses and certificates of mining shares. I stood aghast as I recognized the names of one or two extravagant failures of the last ten years, — "played-out" mines that had been galvanized into deceptive life in London, Paris, and New York, to the grief of shareholders abroad and the laughter of the initiated at home. I could scarcely keep my equanimity. "You do not mean to say that you have any belief or interest in this rubbish?" I said quickly.

"What you call 'rubbish,' my good Pancho, ees the rubbish that the American speculator have dump himself upon them in the shaft, the rubbish of the advertisement, of the extravagant expense, of the salary, of the assessment, of the 'freeze-out.' For thees, look you, is the old Mexican mine. My grandfather and hees father have both seen them work before you were born, and the American knew not there was gold in California."

I knew he spoke truly. One or two were original silver mines in the south, worked by peons and Indian slaves, a rope windlass, and a venerable donkey.

"But those were silver mines," I said suspiciously, "and these are gold specimens."

"They are from the same mother," said the imperturbable Enriquez, — "the same mine. The old peons worked him for *silver*, the precious dollar that buy everything, that he send in the galleon to the Philippines for the silk and spice! *That* is good enough for *him!* For the gold he made nothing, even as my leetle wife Urania. And regard me here! There ees a proverb of my father's which say that 'it shall take a gold mine to work a silver mine,' so mooch more he cost. You work him, you are lost! *Naturalmente*, if you turn him round, if it take you only a silver mine to work a gold mine, you are gain. Thees ees logic!"

The intense gravity of his face at this extraordinary deduction upset my own. But as I was never certain that Enriquez was not purposely mystifying me, with some ulterior object, I could not help saying a little wickedly: —

"Yes, I understand all that; but how about this geologian? Will he not tell your wife? You know he was a great admirer of hers."

"That shall show the great intelligence of him, my Pancho. He will have the four 'S's,' especially the *secreto!*"

There could be no serious discussion in his present mood.

I gathered up the pages of his wife's manuscript, saying lightly that, as she had the first claim upon my time, I should examine the Aztec material and report in a day or two. As I knew I had little chance in the hands of these two incomprehensibles together, I begged him not to call his wife, but to convey my adieus to her, and, in spite of his embraces and protestations, I managed to get out of the room. But I had scarcely reached the front door when I heard Enriquez's voice and his bounding step on the stairs. In another moment his arm was round my neck.

"You must return on the instant! Mother of God! I haf forget, *she* haf forget, *we* all haf forget! But you have not seen him!"

"Seen whom?"

"*El niño*, the baby! You comprehend, pig! The *criaturica*, the leetle child of ourselfs!"

"The baby?" I said confusedly. "*Is* there — is there a *baby?*"

"You hear him?" said Enriquez, sending an appealing voice upward. "You hear him, Urania? You comprehend. This beast of a leetle brother demands if there ees one!"

"I beg your pardon," I said, hurriedly reascending the stairs. On the landing I met Mrs. Saltillo, but as calm, composed, and precise as her husband was extravagant and vehement. "It was an oversight of Enriquez's," she said quietly, reëntering the room with us; "and was all the more strange, as the child was in the room with you all the time."

She pointed to the corner of the wall, where hung what I had believed to be an old Indian relic. To my consternation, it *was* a bark "papoose-case," occupied by a *living* child, swathed and bandaged after the approved Indian fashion. It was asleep, I believe, but it opened a pair of bright huckleberry eyes, set in the smallest of features, that

were like those of a carved ivory idol, and uttered a "coo" at the sound of its mother's voice. She stood on one side with unruffled composure, while Enriquez threw himself into an attitude before it, with clasped hands, as if it had been an image of the Holy Child. For myself, I was too astounded to speak; luckily, my confusion was attributed to the inexperience of a bachelor.

"I have adopted," said Mrs. Saltillo, with the faintest touch of maternal pride in her manner, "what I am convinced is the only natural and hygienic mode of treating the human child. It may be said to be a reversion to the aborigine, but I have yet to learn that it is not superior to our civilized custom. By these bandages the limbs of the infant are kept in proper position until they are strong enough to support the body, and such a thing as malformation is unknown. It is protected by its cradle, which takes the place of its incubating-shell, from external injury, the injudicious coddling of nurses, the so-called 'dancings' and pernicious rockings. The supine position, as in the adult, is imposed only at night. By the aid of this strap it may be carried on long journeys, either by myself or by Enriquez, who thus shares with me, as he fully recognizes, its equal responsibility and burden."

"It — certainly does not — cry," I stammered.

"Crying," said Mrs. Saltillo, with a curve of her pretty red lip, "is the protest of the child against insanitary and artificial treatment. In its upright, unostentatious cradle it is protected against that injudicious fondling and dangerous promiscuous osculation to which, as an infant in human arms, it is so often subjected. Above all, it is kept from that shameless and mortifying publicity so unjust to the weak and unformed animal. The child repays this consideration by a gratifying silence. It cannot be expected to understand our thoughts, speech, or actions; it cannot participate in our pleasures. Why should it be forced into

premature contact with them, merely to feed our vanity or selfishness? Why should we assume our particular parental accident as superior to the common lot? If we do not give our offspring that prominence before our visitors so common to the young wife and husband, it is for that reason solely; and this may account for what seemed the forgetfulness of Enriquez in speaking of it or pointing it out to you. And I think his action in calling you back to see it was somewhat precipitate. As one does not usually introduce an unknown and inferior stranger without some previous introduction, he might have asked you if you wished to see the baby before he recalled you."

I looked from Urania's unfathomable eyes to Enriquez's impenetrable countenance. I might have been equal to either of them alone, but together they were invincible. I looked hopelessly at the baby. With its sharp little eyes and composed face, it certainly was a marvelous miniature of Enriquez. I said so.

"It would be singular if it was not," said Mrs. Saltillo dryly; "and as I believe it is by no means an uncommon fact in human nature, it seems to me strange that people should insist upon it as a discovery. It is an inheritance, however, that in due time progress and science will no doubt interrupt, to the advancement of the human race. I need not say that both Enriquez and myself look forward to it with confident tranquillity."

There was clearly nothing for me to do now but to shake hands again and take my leave. Yet I was so much impressed with the unreality of the whole scene that when I reached the front door I had a strong impulse to return suddenly and fall in upon them in their relaxed and natural attitudes. They could not keep up this pose between themselves; and I half expected to see their laughing faces at the window, as I glanced up before wending my perilous way to the street.

I found Mrs. Saltillo's manuscript well written and, in the narrative parts, even graphic and sparkling. I suppressed some general remarks on the universe, and some correlative theories of existence, as not appertaining particularly to the Aztecs, and as not meeting any unquenchable thirst for information on the part of the readers of the "Daily Excelsior." I even promoted my fair contributor to the position of having been commissioned, at a great expense, to make the Mexican journey especially for the "Excelsior." This, with Mrs. Saltillo's somewhat precise preraphaelite drawings and water-colors, vilely reproduced by woodcuts, gave quite a sensational air to her production, which, divided into parts, for two or three days filled a whole page of the paper. I am not aware of any particular service that it did to ethnology; but, as I pointed out in the editorial column, it showed that the people of California were not given over by material greed to the exclusion of intellectual research; and as it was attacked instantly in long communications from one or two scientific men, it thus produced more copy.

Briefly, it was a boom for the author and the "Daily Excelsior." I should add, however, that a rival newspaper intimated that it was also a boom for Mrs. Saltillo's *husband*, and called attention to the fact that a deserted Mexican mine, known as "El Bolero," was described graphically in the Aztec article among the news, and again appeared in the advertising columns of the same paper. I turned somewhat indignantly to the file of the "Excelsior," and, singularly enough, found in the elaborate prospectus of a new gold-mining company the description of the El Bolero mine as a *quotation* from the Aztec article, with extraordinary inducements for the investment of capital in the projected working of an old mine. If I had had any difficulty in recognizing in the extravagant style the flamboyant hand of Enriquez in English writing, I might have read his name

plainly enough displayed as president of the company. It was evidently the prospectus of one of the ventures he had shown me. I was more amused than indignant at the little trick he had played upon my editorial astuteness. After all, if I had thus benefited the young couple I was satisfied. I had not seen them since my first visit, as I was very busy, — my communications with Mrs. Saltillo had been carried on by letters and proofs, — and when I did finally call at their house, it was only to find that they were visiting at San José. I wondered whether the baby was still hanging on the wall, or, if he was taken with them, who carried him.

A week later the stock of El Bolero was quoted at par. More than that, an incomprehensible activity had been given to all the deserted Mexican mines, and people began to look up scrip hitherto thrown aside as worthless. Whether it was one of those extraordinary fevers which attacked Californian speculation in the early days, or whether Enriquez Saltillo had infected the stock-market with his own extravagance, I never knew; but plans as wild, inventions as fantastic, and arguments as illogical as ever emanated from his own brain, were set forth "on 'Change" with a gravity equal to his own. The most reasonable hypothesis was that it was the effect of the well-known fact that the Spanish Californian hitherto had not been a mining speculator, nor connected in any way with the gold production on his native soil, deeming it inconsistent with his patriarchal life and landed dignity, and that when a "son of one of the oldest Spanish families, identified with the land and its peculiar character for centuries, lent himself to its mineral exploitations," — I beg to say that I am quoting from the advertisement in the "Excelsior," — "it was a guerdon of success." This was so far true that in a week Enriquez Saltillo was rich, and in a fair way to become a millionaire.

It was a hot afternoon when I alighted from the stifling Wingdam coach, and stood upon the cool, deep veranda of the Carquinez Springs Hotel. After I had shaken off the dust which had lazily followed us, in our descent of the mountain road, like a red smoke, occasionally overflowing the coach windows, I went up to the room I had engaged for my brief holiday. I knew the place well, although I could see that the hotel itself had lately been redecorated and enlarged to meet the increasing requirements of fashion. I knew the forest of enormous redwoods where one might lose one's self in a five minutes' walk from the veranda. I knew the rocky trail that climbed the mountain to the springs, twisting between giant boulders. I knew the arid garden, deep in the wayside dust, with its hurriedly planted tropical plants, already withering in the dry autumn sunshine, and washed into fictitious freshness, night and morning, by the hydraulic irrigating-hose. I knew, too, the cool, reposeful winds that swept down from invisible snow-crests beyond, with the hanging out of monstrous stars, that too often failed to bring repose to the feverish guests. For the overstrained neurotic workers who fled hither from the baking plains of Sacramento, or from the chill sea-fogs of San Francisco, never lost the fierce unrest that had driven them here. Unaccustomed to leisure, their enforced idleness impelled them to seek excitement in the wildest gayeties; the bracing mountain air only reinvigorated them to pursue pleasure as they had pursued the occupations they had left behind. Their sole recreations were furious drives over break-neck roads; mad, scampering cavalcades through the sedate woods; gambling parties in private rooms, where large sums were lost by capitalists on leave; champagne suppers; and impromptu balls that lasted through the calm, reposeful night to the first rays of light on the distant snow-line. Unimaginative men, in their temporary sojourn they more often outraged or dispossessed Nature in

her own fastnesses than courted her for sympathy or solitude. There were playing-cards left lying behind boulders, and empty champagne bottles forgotten in forest depths.

I remembered all this when, refreshed by a bath, I leaned from the balcony of my room and watched the pulling up of a brake, drawn by six dusky, foam-bespattered horses, driven by a noted capitalist. As its hot, perspiring, closely-veiled yet burning-faced fair occupants descended, in all the dazzling glory of summer toilets, and I saw the gentlemen consult their watches with satisfaction, and congratulate their triumphant driver, I knew the characteristic excitement they had enjoyed from a "record run," probably for a bet, over a mountain road in a burning sun.

"Not bad, eh? Forty-four minutes from the summit!"

The voice seemed at my elbow. I turned quickly to recognize an acquaintance, a young San Francisco broker, leaning from the next balcony to mine. But my attention was just then preoccupied by the face and figure, which seemed familiar to me, of a woman who was alighting from the brake.

"Who is that?" I asked; "the straight, slim woman in gray, with the white veil twisted round her felt hat?"

"Mrs. Saltillo," he answered; "wife of 'El Bolero' Saltillo, don't you know. Mighty pretty woman, if she is a little stiffish and set up."

Then I had not been mistaken! "Is Enriquez — is her husband — here?" I asked quickly.

The man laughed. "I reckon not. This is the place for other people's husbands, don't you know."

Alas! I *did* know; and as there flashed upon me all the miserable scandals and gossip connected with this reckless, frivolous caravansary, I felt like resenting his suggestion. But my companion's next words were more significant: —

"Besides, if what they say is true, Saltillo would n't be very popular here."

"I don't understand," I said quickly.

"Why, after all that row he had with the El Bolero Company."

"I never heard of any row," I said, in astonishment.

The broker laughed incredulously. "Come! and *you* a newspaper man! Well, maybe they *did* try to hush it up, and keep it out of the papers, on account of the stock. But it seems he got up a reg'lar shindy with the board, one day; called 'em thieves and swindlers, and allowed he was disgracing himself as a Spanish hidalgo by having anything to do with 'em. Talked, they say, about Charles V. of Spain, or some other royal galoot, giving his ancestors the land in trust! Clean off his head, I reckon. Then shunted himself off the company, and sold out. You can guess he would n't be very popular around here, with Jim Bestley, there," pointing to the capitalist who had driven the brake, "who used to be on the board with him. No, sir. He was either lying low for something, or was off his head. Think of his throwing up a place like that!"

"Nonsense!" I said indignantly. "He is mercurial, and has the quick impulsiveness of his race, but I believe him as sane as any who sat with him on the board. There must be some mistake, or you have n't got the whole story." Nevertheless, I did not care to discuss an old friend with a mere acquaintance, and I felt secretly puzzled to account for his conduct, in the face of his previous cleverness in manipulating the El Bolero, and the undoubted fascination he had previously exercised over the stockholders. The story had, of course, been garbled in repetition. I had never before imagined what might be the effect of Enriquez's peculiar eccentricities upon matter-of-fact people, — I had found them only amusing, — and the broker's suggestion annoyed me. However, Mrs. Saltillo was here in the hotel,

and I should, of course, meet her. Would she be as frank with me?

I was disappointed at not finding her in the drawing-room or on the veranda; and the heat being still unusually oppressive, I strolled out towards the redwoods, hesitating for a moment in the shade before I ran the fiery gauntlet of the garden. To my surprise, I had scarcely passed the giant sentinels on its outskirts before I found that, from some unusual condition of the atmosphere, the cold undercurrent of air which generally drew through these pillared aisles was withheld that afternoon; it was absolutely hotter than in the open, and the wood was charged throughout with the acrid spices of the pine. I turned back to the hotel, reascended to my bedroom, and threw myself in an armchair by the open window. My room was near the end of a wing; the corner room at the end was next to mine, on the same landing. Its closed door, at right angles to my open one, gave upon the staircase, but was plainly visible from where I sat. I remembered being glad that it was shut, as it enabled me without offense to keep my own door open.

The house was very quiet. The leaves of a catalpa, across the roadway, hung motionless. Somebody yawned on the veranda below. I threw away my half-finished cigar, and closed my eyes. I think I had not lost consciousness for more than a few seconds before I was awakened by the shaking and thrilling of the whole building. As I staggered to my feet, I saw the four pictures hanging against the wall swing outwardly from it on their cords, and my door swing back against the wall. At the same moment, acted upon by the same potential impulse, the door of the end room in the hall, opposite the stairs, also swung open. In that brief moment I had a glimpse of the interior of the room, of two figures, a man and a woman, the latter clinging to her companion in abject terror. It was only for an instant, for a second thrill passed through

the house, the pictures clattered back against the wall, the door of the end room closed violently on its strange revelation, and my own door swung back also. Apprehensive of what might happen, I sprang toward it, but only to arrest it an inch or two before it should shut, when, as my experience had taught me, it might stick by the subsidence of the walls. But it did stick ajar, and remained firmly fixed in that position. From the clattering of the knob of the other door, and the sound of hurried voices behind it, I knew that the same thing had happened there when that door had fully closed.

I was familiar enough with earthquakes to know that, with the second shock or subsidence of the earth, the immediate danger was passed, and so I was able to note more clearly what else was passing. There was the usual sudden stampede of hurrying feet, the solitary oath and scream, the half-hysterical laughter, and silence. Then the tumult was reawakened to the sound of high voices, talking all together, or the impatient calling of absentees in halls and corridors. Then I heard the quick swish of female skirts on the staircase, and one of the fair guests knocked impatiently at the door of the end room, still immovably fixed. At the first knock there was a sudden cessation of the hurried whisperings and turning of the door-knob.

"Mrs. Saltillo, are you there? Are you frightened?" she called.

"Mrs. Saltillo"! It was *she*, then, who was in the room! I drew nearer my door, which was still fixed ajar. Presently a voice, — Mrs. Saltillo's voice, — with a constrained laugh in it, came from behind the door: "Not a bit. I'll come down in a minute."

"Do," persisted the would-be intruder. "It 's all over now, but we 're all going out into the garden; it 's safer."

"All right," answered Mrs. Saltillo. "Don't wait, dear. I 'll follow. Run away, now."

The visitor, who was evidently still nervous, was glad to hurry away, and I heard her retreating step on the staircase. The rattling of the door began again, and at last it seemed to yield to a stronger pull, and opened sufficiently to allow Mrs. Saltillo to squeeze through. I withdrew behind my door. I fancied that it creaked as she passed, as if, noticing it ajar, she had laid an inquiring hand upon it. I waited, but she was not followed by any one. I wondered if I had been mistaken. I was going to the bell-rope to summon assistance to move my own door when a sudden instinct withheld me. If there was any one still in that room, he might come from it just as the servant answered my call, and a public discovery would be unavoidable. I was right. In another instant the figure of a man, whose face I could not discern, slipped out of the room, passed my door, and went stealthily down the staircase.

Convinced of this, I resolved not to call public attention to my being in my own room at the time of the incident; so I did not summon any one, but, redoubling my efforts, I at last opened the door sufficiently to pass out, and at once joined the other guests in the garden. Already, with characteristic recklessness and audacity, the earthquake was made light of; the only dictate of prudence had resolved itself into a hilarious proposal to "camp out" in the woods all night, and have a "torch-light picnic." Even then preparations were being made for carrying tents, blankets, and pillows to the adjacent redwoods; dinner and supper, cooked at camp-fires, were to be served there on stumps of trees and fallen logs. The convulsion of nature had been used as an excuse for one of the wildest freaks of extravagance that Carquinez Springs had ever known. Perhaps that quick sense of humor which dominates the American male in exigencies of this kind kept the extravagances from being merely bizarre and grotesque, and it was presently known

that the hotel and its ménage were to be appropriately burlesqued by some of the guests, who, attired as Indians, would personate the staff, from the oracular hotel proprietor himself down to the smart hotel clerk.

During these arrangements I had a chance of drawing near Mrs. Saltillo. I fancied she gave a slight start as she recognized me; but her greetings were given with her usual precision. "Have you been here long?" she asked.

"I have only just come," I replied laughingly; "in time for the shock."

"Ah, you felt it, then? I was telling these ladies that our eminent geologist, Professor Dobbs, assured me that these seismic disturbances in California have a very remote centre, and are seldom serious."

"It must be very satisfactory to have the support of geology at such a moment," I could not help saying, though I had not the slightest idea whose the figure was that I had seen, nor, indeed, had I recognized it among the guests. She did not seem to detect any significance in my speech, and I added: "And where is Enriquez? He would enjoy this proposed picnic to-night."

"Enriquez is at Salvatierra Rancho, which he lately bought from his cousin."

"And the baby? Surely, here is a chance for you to hang him up on a redwood to-night, in his cradle."

"The boy," said Mrs. Saltillo quickly, "is no longer in his cradle; he has passed the pupa state, and is now free to develop his own perfected limbs. He is with his father. I do not approve of children being submitted to the indiscriminate attentions of a hotel. I am here myself only for that supply of ozone indicated for brain exhaustion."

She looked so pretty and prim in her gray dress, so like her old correct self, that I could not think of anything but her mental attitude, which did not, by the way, seem much like mental depression. Yet I was aware that I was getting

no information of Enriquez's condition or affairs, unless the whole story told by the broker was an exaggeration. I did not, however, dare to ask more particularly.

"You remember Professor Dobbs?" she asked abruptly.

This recalled a suspicion awakened by my vision, so suddenly that I felt myself blushing. She did not seem to notice it, and was perfectly composed.

"I do remember him. Is he here?"

"He is; that is what makes it so particularly unfortunate for me. You see, after that affair of the board, and Enriquez's withdrawal, although Enriquez may have been a little precipitate in his energetic way, I naturally took my husband's part in public; for although we preserve our own independence inviolable, we believe in absolute confederation as against society."

"But what has Professor Dobbs to do with the board?" I interrupted.

"The professor was scientific and geological adviser to the board, and it was upon some report or suggestion of his that Enriquez took issue, against the sentiment of the board. It was a principle affecting Enriquez's Spanish sense of honor."

"Do tell me all about it," I said eagerly; "I am very anxious to know the truth."

"As I was not present at the time," said Mrs. Saltillo, rebuking my eagerness with a gentle frigidity, "I am unable to do so. Anything else would be mere hearsay, and more or less *ex parte*. I do not approve of gossip."

"But what did Enriquez tell you? You surely know that."

"*That*, being purely confidential, as between husband and wife, — perhaps I should say partner and partner, — of course you do not expect me to disclose. Enough that *I* was satisfied with it. I should not have spoken to you about it at all, but that, through myself and Enriquez, you are an acquaintance of the professor's, and I might save you the

awkwardness of presenting yourself with him. Otherwise, although you are a friend of Enriquez, it need not affect your acquaintance with the professor."

"Hang the professor!" I ejaculated. "I don't care a rap for *him*."

"Then I differ with you," said Mrs. Saltillo, with precision. "He is distinctly an able man, and one cannot but miss the contact of his original mind and his liberal teachings."

Here she was joined by one of the ladies, and I lounged away. I dare say it was very mean and very illogical, but the unsatisfactory character of this interview made me revert again to the singular revelation I had seen a few hours before. I looked anxiously for Professor Dobbs; but when I did meet him, with an indifferent nod of recognition, I found I could by no means identify him with the figure of her mysterious companion. And why should I suspect him at all, in the face of Mrs. Saltillo's confessed avoidance of him? Who, then, could it have been? I had seen them but an instant, in the opening and the shutting of a door. It was merely the shadowy bulk of a man that flitted past my door, after all. Could I have imagined the whole thing? Were my perceptive faculties — just aroused from slumber, too — sufficiently clear to be relied upon? Would I not have laughed had Urania, or even Enriquez himself, told me such a story?

As I reëntered the hotel the clerk handed me a telegram. "There 's been a pretty big shake all over the country," he said eagerly. "Everybody is getting news and inquiries from their friends. Anything fresh?" He paused interrogatively as I tore open the envelope. The dispatch had been redirected from the office of the "Daily Excelsior." It was dated, "Salvatierra Rancho," and contained a single line: "Come and see your old uncle 'Ennery."

There was nothing in the wording of the message that

was unlike Enriquez's usual light-hearted levity, but the fact that he should have *telegraphed* it to me struck me uneasily. That I should have received it at the hotel where his wife and Professor Dobbs were both staying, and where I had had such a singular experience, seemed to me more than a mere coincidence. An instinct that the message was something personal to Enriquez and myself kept me from imparting it to Mrs. Saltillo. After worrying half the night in our bizarre camp in the redwoods, in the midst of a restless festivity which was scarcely the repose I had been seeking at Carquinez Springs, I resolved to leave the next day for Salvatierra Rancho. I remembered the rancho, — a low, golden-brown, adobe-walled quadrangle, sleeping like some monstrous ruminant in a hollow of the Contra Costa Range. I recalled, in the midst of this noisy picnic, the slumberous coolness of its long corridors and soundless courtyard, and hailed it as a relief. The telegram was a sufficient excuse for my abrupt departure. In the morning I left, but without again seeing either Mrs. Saltillo or the professor.

It was late the next afternoon when I rode through the *cañada* that led to the rancho. I confess my thoughts were somewhat gloomy, in spite of my escape from the noisy hotel; but this was due to the sombre scenery through which I had just ridden, and the monotonous russet of the leagues of wild oats. As I approached the rancho, I saw that Enriquez had made no attempt to modernize the old *casa*, and that even the garden was left in its lawless native luxuriance, while the rude tiled sheds near the walled corral contained the old farming implements, unchanged for a century, even to the ox-carts, the wheels of which were made of a single block of wood. A few peons, in striped shirts and velvet jackets, were sunning themselves against a wall, and near them hung a half-drained *pellejo*, or goatskin water-bag. The air of absolute shiftlessness must have been repellent to Mrs. Saltillo's orderly precision, and for a moment

I pitied her. But it was equally inconsistent with Enriquez's enthusiastic ideas of American progress, and the extravagant designs he had often imparted to me of the improvements he would make when he had a fortune. I was feeling uneasy again, when I suddenly heard the rapid clack of unshod hoofs on a rocky trail that joined my own. At the same instant a horseman dashed past me at full speed. I had barely time to swerve my own horse aside to avoid a collision, yet in that brief moment I recognized the figure of Enriquez. But his face I should have scarcely known. It was hard and fixed. His upper lip and thin, penciled mustache were drawn up over his teeth, which were like a white gash in his dark face. He turned into the courtyard of the rancho. I put spurs to my horse, and followed, in nervous expectation. He turned in his saddle as I entered. But the next moment he bounded from his horse, and, before I could dismount, flew to my side and absolutely lifted me from the saddle to embrace me. It was the old Enriquez again; his face seemed to have utterly changed in that brief moment.

"This is all very well, old chap," I said; "but do you know that you nearly ran me down, just now, with that infernal half-broken mustang? Do you usually charge the *casa* at that speed?"

"Pardon, my leetle brother! But here you shall slip up. The mustang is not *half* broken; he is not broke at all! Look at his hoof — never have a shoe been there. For myself — attend me! When I rride alone, I think mooch; when I think mooch, I think fast; my idea he go like a cannon-ball! Consequent, if I rride not thees horse like the cannon-ball, my thought *he* arrive first, and where are you? You get left! Believe me that I fly thees horse, thees old Mexican plug, and your de' uncle 'Ennery and his leetle old idea arrive all the same time, and on the instant."

It *was* the old Enriquez! I perfectly understood his

extravagant speech and illustration, and yet for the first time I wondered if others did.

"Tak'-a-drink!" he said, all in one word. "You shall possess the old Bourbon or the rhum from the Santa Cruz! Name your poison, gentlemen!"

He had already dragged me up the steps from the *patio* to the veranda, and seated me before a small round table still covered with the chocolate equipage of the morning. A little dried-up old Indian woman took it away, and brought the spirits and glasses.

"*Mirar* the leetle old one!" said Enriquez, with unflinching gravity. "Consider her, Pancho, to the bloosh! She is not truly an Aztec, but she is of years one hundred and one, and *lifs!* Possibly she haf not the beauty which ravishes, which devastates. But she shall attent you to the hot water, to the bath. Thus shall you be protect, my leetle brother, from scandal."

"Enriquez," I burst out suddenly, "tell me about yourself. Why did you leave the El Bolero board? What was the row about?"

Enriquez's eyes for a moment glittered; then they danced as before.

"Ah," he said, "you have heard?"

"Something; but I want to know the truth from you."

He lighted a cigarette and lifted himself backward into a grass hammock, on which he sat, swinging his feet. Then, pointing to another hammock, he said: "Tranquilize yourself there. I will relate; but, truly, it ees nothing."

He took a long pull at his cigarette, and for a few moments seemed quietly to exude smoke from his eyes, ears, nose, even his finger-ends, — everywhere, in fact, but his mouth. That and his mustache remained fixed. Then he said slowly, flicking away the ashes with his little finger: —

"First you understand, friend Pancho, that *I* make no row. The other themself make the row, the shindig. They

make the dance, the howl, the snap of the finger, the oath, the 'Helen blazes,' the 'Wot the devil,' the 'That be d—d,' the bad language; they themselves finger the revolver, advance the bowie-knife, throw off the coat, square off, and say 'Come on.' I remain as you see me now, leetle brother — tranquil." He lighted another cigarette, made his position more comfortable in the hammock, and resumed: "The Professor Dobbs, who is the geologian of the company, made a report for which he got two thousand dollar. But thees report — look you, friend Pancho — he is not good for the mine. For in the hole in the ground the Professor Dobbs have found a 'hoss.'"

"A what?" I asked.

"A hoss," repeated Enriquez, with infinite gravity. "But not, leetle Pancho, the hoss that run, the hoss that buck-jump, but what the miner call a 'hoss,' a something that rear up in the vein and stop him. You pick around the hoss; you pick under him; sometimes you find the vein, sometimes you do not. The hoss rear up, and remain! Eet ees not good for the mine. The board say, 'D—— the hoss!' 'Get rid of the hoss.' 'Chuck out the hoss.' Then they talk together, and one say to the Professor Dobbs: 'Eef you cannot thees hoss remove from the mine, you can take him out of the report.' He look to me, thees professor. I see nothing; I remain tranquil. Then the board say: 'Thees report with the hoss in him is worth two thousand dollar, but *without* the hoss he is worth five thousand dollar. For the stockholder is frighted of the rearing hoss. It is of a necessity that the stockholder should remain tranquil. Without the hoss the report is good; the stock shall errise; the director shall sell out, and leave the stockholder the hoss to play with.' The professor he say, 'Al-right;' he scratch out the hoss, sign his name, and get a check for three thousand dollar."

"Then I errise — so!" He got up from the hammock,

suiting the action to the word, and during the rest of his narrative, I honestly believe, assumed the same attitude and deliberate intonation he had exhibited at the board. I could even fancy I saw the reckless, cynical faces of his brother directors turned upon his grim, impassive features. "I am tranquil; I smoke my cigarette. I say that for three hundred year my family have held the land of thees mine; that it pass from father to son, and from son to son; it pass by gift, it pass by grant, but that *nevarre there pass a lie with it!* I say it was a gift by a Spanish Christian king to a Christian hidalgo for the spread of the gospel, and not for the cheat and the swindle! I say that this mine was worked by the slave, and by the mule, by the ass, but never by the cheat and swindler. I say that if they have struck the hoss in the mine, they have struck a hoss *in the land*, a Spanish hoss; a hoss that have no bridle worth five thousand dollar in his mouth, but a hoss to rear, and a hoss that cannot be struck out by a Yankee geologian; and that hoss is Enriquez Saltillo!"

He paused and laid aside his cigarette. "Then they say, 'Dry up,' and 'Sell out;' and the great bankers say, 'Name your own price for your stock, and resign.' And I say, 'There is not enough gold in your bank, in your San Francisco, in the mines of California, that shall buy a Spanish gentleman. When I leave, I leave the stock at my back; I shall take it, nevarre!' Then the banker he say, 'And you will go and blab, I suppose?' And then, Pancho, I smile, I pick up my mustache — so! and I say: 'Pardon, señor, you haf mistake. The Saltillo haf for three hundred year no stain, no blot upon him. Eet is not now — the last of the race — who shall confess that he haf sit at a board of disgrace and dishonor!' And then it is that the band begin to play, and the animals stand on their hind leg and waltz, and behold, the row he haf begin!"

I ran over to him, and fairly hugged him. But he put

me aside with a gentle and philosophical calm. "Ah, eet is nothing, Pancho. It is, believe me, all the same a hundred years to come, and where are you, then? The earth he turn round, and then come *el temblor*, the earthquake, and there you are! Bah! eet is not of the board that I have asked you to come; it is something else I would tell you. Go and wash yourself of thees journey, my leetle brother, as I have" — looking at his narrow, brown, well-bred hands — "wash myself of the board. Be very careful of the leetle old woman, Pancho; do not wink to her of the eye! Consider, my leetle brother, for one hundred and one year she haf been as a nun, a saint! Disturb not her tranquillity."

Yes, it was the old Enriquez; but he seemed graver, — if I could use that word of one of such persistent gravity; only his gravity heretofore had suggested a certain irony rather than a melancholy which I now fancied I detected. And what was this "something else" he was to "tell me later"? Did it refer to Mrs. Saltillo? I had purposely waited for him to speak of her, before I should say anything of my visit to Carquinez Springs. I hurried through my ablutions in the hot water, brought in a bronze jar on the head of the centenarian handmaid; and even while I was smiling over Enriquez's caution regarding this aged Ruth, I felt I was getting nervous to hear his news.

I found him in his sitting-room, or study, — a long, low apartment with small, deep windows like embrasures in the outer adobe wall, but glazed in lightly upon the veranda. He was sitting quite abstractedly, with a pen in his hand, before a table, on which a number of sealed envelopes were lying. He looked *so* formal and methodical for Enriquez.

"You like the old *casa*, Pancho?" he said, in reply to my praise of its studious and monastic gloom. "Well, my leetle brother, some day that is fair — who knows? — it may be at your *disposicion;* not of our politeness, but of

a truth, friend Pancho. For, if I leave it to my wife" — it was the first time he had spoken of her — "for my leetle child," he added quickly, "I shall put in a bond, an *obligacion*, that my friend Pancho shall come and go as he will."

"The Saltillos are a long-lived race," I laughed. "I shall be a gray-haired man, with a house and family of my own, by that time." But I did not like the way he had spoken.

"*Quien sabe?*" he only said, dismissing the question with the national gesture. After a moment he added: "I shall tell you something that is strrange, so strrange that you shall say, like the banker say, 'Thees Enriquez, he ees off his head; he ees a crank, a *lunatico;*' but it ees a *fact;* believe me, I have said!"

He rose, and, going to the end of the room, opened a door. It showed a pretty little room, femininely arranged in Mrs. Saltillo's refined taste. "Eet is pretty; eet is the room of my wife. *Bueno!* attend me now." He closed the door, and walked back to the table. "I have sit here and write when the earthquake arrive. I have feel the shock, the grind of the walls on themselves, the tremor, the stagger, and — that — door — he swing open!"

"The door?" I said, with a smile that I felt was ghastly.

"Comprehend me," he said quickly; "it ees not *that* which ees strrange. The wall lift, the lock slip, the door he fell open; it is frequent; it comes so ever when the earthquake come. But eet is not my wife's room I see; it is *another room*, a room I know not. My wife Urania, she stand there, of a fear, of a tremble; she grasp, she cling to some one. The earth shake again; the door shut. I jump from my table; I shake and tumble to the door. I fling him open. *Maravilloso!* it is the room of my wife again. She is *not* there; it is empty; it is nothing!"

I felt myself turning hot and cold by turns. I was horrified, and — and I blundered. "And who was the other figure?" I gasped.

"Who?" repeated Enriquez, with a pause, a fixed look at me, and a sublime gesture. "Who *should* it be, but myself, Enriquez Saltillo?"

A terrible premonition that this was a chivalrous *lie*, that it was *not* himself he had seen, but that our two visions were identical, came upon me. "After all," I said, with a fixed smile, "if you could imagine you saw your wife, you could easily imagine you saw yourself, too. In the shock of the moment you thought of *her* naturally, for then she would as naturally seek your protection. You have written for news of her?"

"No," said Enriquez quietly.

"No?" I repeated amazedly.

"You understand, Pancho! Eef it was the trick of my eyes, why should I affright her for the thing that is not? If it is the truth, and it arrive to *me*, as a warning, why shall I affright her before it come?"

"Before *what* comes? What is it a warning of?" I asked impetuously.

"That we shall be separated! That *I* go, and she do not."

To my surprise, his dancing eyes had a slight film over them. "I don't understand you," I said awkwardly.

"Your head is not of a level, my Pancho. Thees earthquake he remain for only ten seconds, and he fling open the door. If he remain for twenty seconds, he fling open the wall, the hoose toomble, and your friend Enriquez is feenish."

"Nonsense!" I said. "Professor — I mean the geologists — say that the centre of disturbance of these Californian earthquakes is some far-away point in the Pacific, and there never will be any serious convulsions here."

"Ah, the geologist," said Enriquez gravely, "understand the hoss that rear in the mine, and the five thousand dollar, believe me, no more. He haf lif here three year. My family haf lif here three hundred. My grandfather saw the earth swallow the church of San Juan Baptista."

I laughed, until, looking up, I was shocked to see for the first time that his dancing eyes were moist and shining. But almost instantly he jumped up, and declared that I had not seen the garden and the corral, and, linking his arm in mine, swept me like a whirlwind into the *patio*. For an hour or two he was in his old invincible spirits. I was glad I had said nothing of my visit to Carquinez Springs and of seeing his wife; I determined to avoid it as long as possible; and as he did not again refer to her, except in the past, it was not difficult. At last he infected me with his extravagance, and for a while I forgot even the strangeness of his conduct and his confidences. We walked and talked together as of old. I understood and enjoyed him perfectly, and it was not strange that in the end I began to believe that this strange revelation was a bit of his extravagant acting, got up to amuse me. The coincidence of his story with my own experience was not, after all, such a wonderful thing, considering what must have been the nervous and mental disturbance produced by the earthquake. We dined together, attended only by Pedro, an old half-caste body-servant. It was easy to see that the household was carried on economically, and, from a word or two casually dropped by Enriquez, it appeared that the rancho and a small sum of money were all that he retained from his former fortune when he left the El Bolero. The stock he kept intact, refusing to take the dividend upon it until that collapse of the company should occur which he confidently predicted, when he would make good the swindled stockholders. I had no reason to doubt his perfect faith in this.

The next morning we were up early for a breezy gallop over the three square miles of Enriquez's estate. I was astounded, when I descended to the *patio*, to find Enriquez already mounted, and carrying before him, astride of the horn of his saddle, a small child, — the identical papoose of my memorable first visit. But the boy was no longer swathed and bandaged, although, for security, his plump little body was engirt by the same sash that encircled his father's own waist. I felt a stirring of self-reproach; I had forgotten all about him! To my suggestion that the exercise might be fatiguing to him, Enriquez shrugged his shoulders: —

"Believe me, no! He is ever with me when I go on the *pasear*. He is not too yonge. For he shall learn 'to rride, to shoot, and to speak the truth,' even as the Persian chile. Eet ees all I can gif to him."

Nevertheless, I think the boy enjoyed it, and I knew he was safe with such an accomplished horseman as his father. Indeed, it was a fine sight to see them both careering over the broad plain, Enriquez with jingling spurs and whirling *riata*, and the boy, with a face as composed as his father's, and his tiny hand grasping the end of the flapping rein with a touch scarcely lighter than the skillful rider's own. It was a lovely morning; though warm and still, there was a faint haze — a rare thing in that climate — on the distant range. The sun-baked soil, arid and thirsty from the long summer drought, and cracked into long fissures, broke into puffs of dust, with a slight detonation like a pistol-shot, at each stroke of our pounding hoofs. Suddenly my horse swerved in full gallop, almost lost his footing, "broke," and halted with braced forefeet, trembling in every limb. I heard a shout from Enriquez at the same instant, and saw that he too had halted about a hundred paces from me, with his hand uplifted in warning, and be- [illegible] us a long chasm in the dry earth, extending across

the whole field. But the trembling of the horse continued until it communicated itself to me. *I* was shaking, too, and looking about for the cause, when I beheld the most weird and remarkable spectacle I had ever witnessed. The whole *llano*, or plain, stretching to the horizon-line, was *distinctly undulating!* The faint haze of the hills was repeated over its surface, as if a dust had arisen from some grinding displacement of the soil. I threw myself from my horse, but the next moment was fain to cling to him, as I felt the thrill under my very feet. Then there was a pause, and I lifted my head to look for Enriquez. He was nowhere to be seen! With a terrible recollection of the fissure that had yawned between us, I sprang to the saddle again, and spurred the frightened beast toward that point. *But it was gone, too!* I rode backward and forward repeatedly along the line where I had seen it only a moment before. The plain lay compact and uninterrupted, without a crack or fissure. The dusty haze that had arisen had passed as mysteriously away; the clear outline of the valley returned; the great field was empty!

Presently I was aware of the sound of galloping hoofs. I remembered then — what I had at first forgotten — that a few moments before we had crossed an *arroyo*, or dried bed of a stream, depressed below the level of the field. How foolish that I had not remembered! He had evidently sought that refuge; there were his returning hoofs. I galloped toward it, but only to meet a frightened *vaquero*, who had taken that avenue of escape to the rancho.

"Did you see Don Enriquez?" I asked impatiently.

I saw that the man's terror was extreme, and his eyes were staring in their sockets. He hastily crossed himself: —

"Ah, God, yes!"

"Where is he?" I demanded.

"Gone!"

"Where?"

He looked at me with staring, vacant eyes, and, pointing to the ground, said in Spanish: "He has returned to the land of his fathers!"

We searched for him that day and the next, when the country was aroused and his neighbors joined in a quest that proved useless. Neither he nor his innocent burden was ever seen again of men. Whether he had been engulfed by mischance in some unsuspected yawning chasm in that brief moment, or had fulfilled his own prophecy by deliberately erasing himself for some purpose known only to himself, no one ever knew. His country-people shook their heads and said "it was like a Saltillo." And the few among his retainers who knew him and loved him whispered still more ominously: "He will yet return to his land to confound the *Americanos*."

Yet the widow of Enriquez did *not* marry Professor Dobbs. But she too disappeared from California, and years afterward I was told that she was well known to the ingenuous Parisians as the usual wealthy widow "from South America."

AN ESMERALDA OF ROCKY CAÑON

It is to be feared that the hero of this chronicle began life as an impostor. He was offered to the credulous and sympathetic family of a San Francisco citizen as a lamb who, unless bought as a playmate for the children, would inevitably pass into the butcher's hands. A combination of refined sensibility and urban ignorance of nature prevented them from discerning certain glaring facts that betrayed his caprid origin. So a ribbon was duly tied round his neck, and in pleasing emulation of the legendary "Mary," he was taken to school by the confiding children. Here, alas! the fraud was discovered, and history was reversed by his being turned out by the teacher, because he was *not* "a lamb at school." Nevertheless, the kind-hearted mother of the family persisted in retaining him, on the plea that he might yet become "useful." To her husband's feeble suggestion of "gloves," she returned a scornful negative, and spoke of the weakly infant of a neighbor, who might later receive nourishment from this providential animal. But even this hope was destroyed by the eventual discovery of his sex. Nothing remained now but to accept him as an ordinary kid, and to find amusement in his accomplishments, — eating, climbing, and butting. It must be confessed that these were of a superior quality; a capacity to eat everything from a cambric handkerchief to an election poster, an agility which brought him even to the roofs of houses, and a power of overturning by a single push the chubbiest child who opposed him, made him a fearful joy to the nursery. This last quality was incautiously developed in him by a negro boy-servant, who, later,

was hurriedly propelled down a flight of stairs by his too proficient scholar. Having once tasted victory, "Billy" needed no further incitement to his performances. The small wagon which he sometimes consented to draw for the benefit of the children never hindered his attempts to butt the passer-by. On the contrary, on well-known scientific principles he added the impact of the bodies of the children projected over his head in his charge, and the infelicitous pedestrian found himself not only knocked off his legs by Billy, but bombarded by the whole nursery.

Delightful as was this recreation to juvenile limbs, it was felt to be dangerous to the adult public. Indignant protestations were made, and as Billy could not be kept in the house, he may be said to have at last butted himself out of that sympathetic family and into a hard and unfeeling world. One morning he broke his tether in the small back yard. For several days thereafter he displayed himself in guilty freedom on the tops of adjacent walls and outhouses. The San Francisco suburb where his credulous protectors lived was still in a volcanic state of disruption, caused by the grading of new streets through rocks and sandhills. In consequence the roofs of some houses were on the level of the doorsteps of others, and were especially adapted to Billy's performances. One afternoon, to the admiring and perplexed eyes of the nursery, he was discovered standing on the apex of a neighbor's new Elizabethan chimney, on a space scarcely larger than the crown of a hat, calmly surveying the world beneath him. High infantile voices appealed to him in vain; baby arms were outstretched to him in hopeless invitation; he remained exalted and obdurate, like Milton's hero, probably by his own merit "raised to that bad eminence." Indeed, there was already something Satanic in his budding horns and pointed mask as the smoke curled softly around him. Then he appropriately vanished, and San Francisco knew him no

more. At the same time, however, one Owen M'Ginnis, a neighboring sandhill squatter, also disappeared, leaving San Francisco for the southern mines, and he was said to have taken Billy with him, — for no conceivable reason except for companionship. Howbeit, it was the turning-point of Billy's career; such restraint as kindness, civilization, or even policemen had exercised upon his nature was gone. He retained, I fear, a certain wicked intelligence, picked up in San Francisco with the newspapers and theatrical and election posters he had consumed. He reappeared at Rocky Cañon among the miners as an exceedingly agile chamois, with the low cunning of a satyr. That was all that civilization had done for him!

If Mr. M'Ginnis had fondly conceived that he would make Billy "useful," as well as companionable, he was singularly mistaken. Horses and mules were scarce in Rocky Cañon, and he attempted to utilize Billy by making him draw a small cart, laden with auriferous earth, from his claim to the river. Billy, rapidly gaining strength, was quite equal to the task, but alas! not his inborn propensity. An incautious gesture from the first passing miner Billy chose to construe into the usual challenge. Lowering his head, from which his budding horns had been already pruned by his master, he instantly went for his challenger, cart and all. Again the scientific law already pointed out prevailed. With the shock of the onset the entire contents of the cart arose and poured over the astonished miner, burying him from sight. In any other but a Californian mining-camp such a propensity in a draught animal would have been condemned, on account of the damage and suffering it entailed, but in Rocky Cañon it proved unprofitable to the owner from the very amusement and interest it excited. Miners lay in wait for Billy with a "greenhorn," or new-comer, whom they would put up to challenge the animal by some indiscreet gesture. In this way hardly

a cartload of "pay-gravel" ever arrived safely at its destination, and the unfortunate M'Ginnis was compelled to withdraw Billy as a beast of burden. It was whispered that so great had his propensity become, under repeated provocation, that M'Ginnis himself was no longer safe. Going ahead of his cart one day to remove a fallen bough from the trail, Billy construed the act of stooping into a playful challenge from his master, — with the inevitable result.

The next day M'Ginnis appeared with a wheelbarrow, but without Billy. From that day he was relegated to the rocky crags above the camp, from whence he was only lured occasionally by the mischievous miners, who wished to exhibit his peculiar performances. For although Billy had ample food and sustenance among the crags, he had still a civilized longing for posters; and whenever a circus, a concert, or a political meeting was "billed" in the settlement, he was on hand while the paste was yet fresh and succulent. In this way it was averred that he once removed a gigantic theatre bill setting forth the charms of the "Sacramento Pet," and being caught in the act by the advance agent, was pursued through the main street, carrying the damp bill on his horns, eventually affixing it, after his own peculiar fashion, on the back of Judge Boompointer, who was standing in front of his own court-house.

In connection with the visits of this young lady another story concerning Billy survives in the legends of Rocky Cañon. Colonel Starbottle was at that time passing through the settlement on election business, and it was part of his chivalrous admiration for the sex to pay a visit to the pretty actress. The single waiting-room of the little hotel gave upon the veranda, which was also level with the street. After a brief yet gallant interview, in which he oratorically expressed the gratitude of the settlement with old-fashioned Southern courtesy, Colonel Starbottle lifted the chubby little

hand of the "Pet" to his lips, and, with a low bow, backed out upon the veranda. But the Pet was astounded by his instant reappearance, and by his apparently casting himself passionately and hurriedly at her feet! It is needless to say that he was followed closely by Billy, who from the street had casually noticed him, and construed his novel exit into an ungentlemanly challenge.

Billy's visits, however, became less frequent, and as Rocky Cañon underwent the changes incidental to mining settlements, he was presently forgotten in the invasion of a few Southwestern families, and the adoption of amusements less practical and turbulent than he had afforded. It was alleged that he was still seen in the more secluded fastnesses of the mountains, having reverted to a wild state, and it was suggested by one or two of the more adventurous that he might yet become edible, and a fair object of chase. A traveler through the Upper Pass of the cañon related how he had seen a savage-looking, hairy animal like a small elk perched upon inaccessible rocks, but always out of gunshot. But these and other legends were set at naught and overthrown by an unexpected incident.

The Pioneer Coach was toiling up the long grade towards Skinners Pass when Yuba Bill suddenly pulled up, with his feet on the brake.

"Jimminy!" he ejaculated, drawing a deep breath.

The startled passenger beside him on the box followed the direction of his eyes. Through an opening in the wayside pines he could see, a few hundred yards away, a cup-like hollow in the hillside of the vividest green. In the centre a young girl of fifteen or sixteen was dancing and keeping step to the castanet "click" of a pair of "bones," such as negro minstrels use, held in her hands above her head. But, more singular still, a few paces before her a large goat, with its neck roughly wreathed with flowers and vines, was taking ungainly bounds and leaps in imitation

of its companion. The wild background of the Sierras, the pastoral hollow, the incongruousness of the figures, and the vivid color of the girl's red flannel petticoat showing beneath her calico skirt, that had been pinned around her waist, made a striking picture, which by this time had attracted all eyes. Perhaps the dancing of the girl suggested a negro "break-down" rather than any known sylvan measure; but all this, and even the clatter of the bones, was made gracious by the distance.

"Esmeralda! by the living Harry!" shouted the excited passenger on the box.

Yuba Bill took his feet off the brake, and turned a look of deep scorn upon his companion as he gathered the reins again.

"It 's that blanked goat, outer Rocky Cañon beyond, and Polly Harkness! How did she ever come to take up with *him?*"

Nevertheless, as soon as the coach reached Rocky Cañon, the story was quickly told by the passengers, corroborated by Yuba Bill, and highly colored by the observer on the box-seat. Harkness was known to be a new-comer who lived with his wife and only daughter on the other side of Skinners Pass. He was a "logger" and charcoal-burner, who had eaten his way into the serried ranks of pines below the pass, and established in these efforts an almost insurmountable cordon of fallen trees, stripped bark, and charcoal pits around the clearing where his rude log hut stood, — which kept his seclusion unbroken. He was said to be a half-savage mountaineer from Georgia, in whose rude fastnesses he had distilled unlawful whiskey, and that his tastes and habits unfitted him for civilization. His wife chewed and smoked; he was believed to make a fiery brew of his own from acorns and pine nuts; he seldom came to Rocky Cañon except for provisions; his logs were slipped down a "shoot" or slide to the river, where they voyaged once

a month to a distant mill, but *he* did not accompany them. The daughter, seldom seen at Rocky Cañon, was a half-grown girl, brown as autumn fern, wild-eyed, disheveled, in a homespun skirt, sunbonnet, and boy's brogans. Such were the plain facts which skeptical Rocky Cañon opposed to the passengers' legends. Nevertheless, some of the younger miners found it not out of their way to go over Skinners Pass on the journey to the river, but with what success was not told. It was said, however, that a celebrated New York artist, making a tour of California, was on the coach one day going through the pass, and preserved the memory of what he saw there in a well-known picture entitled "Dancing Nymph and Satyr," said by competent critics to be "replete with the study of Greek life." This did not affect Rocky Cañon, where the study of mythology was presumably displaced by an experience of more wonderful flesh-and-blood people, but later it was remembered with some significance.

Among the improvements already noted, a zinc and wooden chapel had been erected in the main street, where a certain popular revivalist preacher of a peculiar South-western sect regularly held exhortatory services. His rude emotional power over his ignorant fellow-sectarians was well known, while curiosity drew others. His effect upon the females of his flock was hysterical and sensational. Women prematurely aged by frontier drudgery and child-bearing, girls who had known only the rigors and pains of a half-equipped, ill-nourished youth in their battling with the hard realities of nature around them, all found a strange fascination in the extravagant glories and privileges of the unseen world he pictured to them, which they might have found in the fairy tales and nursery legends of civilized children had they known them. Personally he was not attractive; his thin, pointed face, and bushy hair rising on either side of his square forehead in two rounded knots, and his long,

straggling, wiry beard dropping from a strong neck and shoulders were indeed of a common Southwestern type; yet in him they suggested something more. This was voiced by a miner who attended his first service, and as the Reverend Mr. Withholder rose in the pulpit, the former was heard to audibly ejaculate, "Dod blasted! — if it ain't Billy!" But when on the following Sunday, to everybody's astonishment, Polly Harkness, in a new white muslin frock and broad-brimmed Leghorn hat, appeared before the church door with the real Billy, and exchanged conversation with the preacher, the likeness was appalling.

I grieve to say that the goat was at once christened by Rocky Cañon as "The Reverend Billy," and the minister himself was Billy's "brother." More than that, when an attempt was made by outsiders, during the service, to inveigle the tethered goat into his old butting performances, and he took not the least notice of their insults and challenges, the epithet "blanked hypocrite" was added to his title.

Had he really reformed? Had his pastoral life with his nymph-like mistress completely cured him of his pugnacious propensity, or had he simply found it was inconsistent with his dancing, and seriously interfered with his "fancy steps"? Had he found tracts and hymn-books were as edible as theatre posters? These were questions that Rocky Cañon discussed lightly, although there was always the more serious mystery of the relations of the Reverend Mr. Withholder, Polly Harkness, and the goat towards each other. The appearance of Polly at church was no doubt due to the minister's active canvass of the districts. But had he ever heard of Polly's dancing with the goat? And where in this plain, angular, badly dressed Polly was hidden that beautiful vision of the dancing nymph which had enthralled so many? And when had Billy ever given any suggestion of his Terpsichorean abilities — before or since? Were

there any "points" of the kind to be discerned in him now? None! Was it not more probable that the Reverend Mr. Withholder had himself been dancing with Polly, and been mistaken for the goat? Passengers who could have been so deceived with regard to Polly's beauty might have as easily mistaken the minister for Billy. About this time another incident occurred which increased the mystery.

The only male in the settlement who apparently dissented from the popular opinion regarding Polly was a newcomer, Jack Filgee. While discrediting her performance with the goat, — which he had never seen, — he was evidently greatly prepossessed with the girl herself. Unfortunately, he was equally addicted to drinking, and as he was exceedingly shy and timid when sober, and quite unpresentable at other times, his wooing, if it could be so called, progressed but slowly. Yet when he found that Polly went to church, he listened so far to the exhortations of the Reverend Mr. Withholder as to promise to come to "Bible class" immediately after the Sunday service. It was a hot afternoon, and Jack, who had kept sober for two days, incautiously fortified himself for the ordeal by taking a drink before arriving. He was nervously early, and immediately took a seat in the empty church near the open door. The quiet of the building, the drowsy buzzing of flies, and perhaps the soporific effect of the liquor caused his eyes to close and his head to fall forward on his breast repeatedly. He was recovering himself for the fourth time when he suddenly received a violent cuff on the ear, and was knocked backward off the bench on which he was sitting. That was all he knew.

He picked himself up with a certain dignity, partly new to him, and partly the result of his condition, and staggered, somewhat bruised and disheveled, to the nearest saloon. Here a few frequenters who had seen him pass,

who knew his errand and the devotion to Polly which had induced it, exhibited a natural concern.

"How 's things down at the gospel shop?" said one. "Look as ef you 'd been wrastlin' with the Sperit, Jack!"

"Old man must hev exhorted pow'ful," said another, glancing at his disordered Sunday attire.

"Ain't be'n hevin' a row with Polly? I 'm told she slings an awful left."

Jack, instead of replying, poured out a dram of whiskey, drank it, and putting down his glass, leaned heavily against the counter as he surveyed his questioners with a sorrow chastened by reproachful dignity.

"I 'm a stranger here, gentlemen," he said slowly; "ye 've known me only a little; but ez ye 've seen me both blind drunk and sober, I reckon ye 've caught on to my gin'ral gait! Now I wanter put it to you, ez fair-minded men, ef you ever saw me strike a parson?"

"No," said a chorus of sympathetic voices. The barkeeper, however, with a swift recollection of Polly and the Reverend Withholder, and some possible contingent jealousy in Jack, added prudently, "Not yet."

The chorus instantly added reflectively, "Well, no; not yet."

"Did ye ever," continued Jack solemnly, "know me to cuss, sass, bully-rag, or say anything agin parsons, or the church?"

"No," said the crowd, overthrowing prudence in curiosity, "ye never did, — we swear it! And now, what 's up?"

"I ain't what you call 'a member in good standin','" he went on, artistically protracting his climax. "I ain't be'n convicted o' sin; I ain't 'a meek an' lowly follower;' I ain't be'n exactly what I orter be'n; I hev n't lived anywhere up to my lights; but is thet a reason why a parson should strike me?"

"Why? What? When did he? Who did?" asked the eager crowd, with one voice.

Jack then painfully related how he had been invited by the Reverend Mr. Withholder to attend the Bible class. How he had arrived early, and found the church empty. How he had taken a seat near the door to be handy when the parson came. How he just felt "kinder kam and good," listenin' to the flies buzzing, and must have fallen asleep, — only he pulled himself up every time, — though, after all, it war n't no crime to fall asleep in an empty church! How "all of a suddent" the parson came in, "give him a clip side o' the head," and knocked him off the bench, and left him there!

"But what did he *say?*" queried the crowd.

"Nuthin'. Afore I could get up, he got away."

"Are you sure it was him?" they asked. "You know you *say* you was asleep."

"Am I sure?" repeated Jack scornfully. "Don't I know thet face and beard? Did n't I feel it hangin' over me?"

"What are you going to do about it?" continued the crowd eagerly.

"Wait till he comes out — and you 'll see," said Jack, with dignity.

This was enough for the crowd; they gathered excitedly at the door, where Jack was already standing, looking towards the church. The moments dragged slowly; it might be a long meeting. Suddenly the church door opened and a figure appeared, looking up and down the street. Jack colored — he recognized Polly — and stepped out into the road. The crowd delicately, but somewhat disappointedly, drew back in the saloon. They did not care to interfere in *that* sort of thing.

Polly saw him, and came hurriedly towards him. She was holding something in her hand.

"I picked this up on the church floor," she said shyly, "so I reckoned you *had* be'n there, — though the parson said you had n't, — and I just excused myself and ran out to give it ye. It 's yourn, ain't it ?" She held up a gold specimen pin, which he had put on in honor of the occasion. "I had a harder time, though, to git this yer, — it 's yourn too, — for Billy was laying down in the yard, back o' the church, and just comf'bly swallerin' it."

"Who ?" said Jack quickly.

"Billy, — my goat."

Jack drew a long breath, and glanced back at the saloon. "Ye ain't goin' back to class now, are ye ?" he said hurriedly. "Ef you ain't, I 'll — I 'll see ye home."

"I don't mind," said Polly demurely, "if it ain't takin' ye outer y'ur way."

Jack offered his arm, and hurrying past the saloon, the happy pair were soon on the road to Skinners Pass.

Jack did not, I regret to say, confess his blunder, but left the Reverend Mr. Withholder to remain under suspicion of having committed an unprovoked assault and battery. It was characteristic of Rocky Cañon, however, that this suspicion, far from injuring his clerical reputation, incited a respect that had been hitherto denied him. A man who could hit out straight from the shoulder had, in the language of the critics, "suthin' in him." Oddly enough, the crowd that had at first sympathized with Jack now began to admit provocations. His subsequent silence, a disposition when questioned on the subject to smile inanely, and, later, when insidiously asked if he had ever seen Polly dancing with the goat, his bursting into uproarious laughter completely turned the current of opinion against him. The public mind, however, soon became engrossed by a more interesting incident.

The Reverend Mr. Withholder had organized a series of Biblical tableaux at Skinnerstown for the benefit of his

church. Illustrations were to be given of "Rebecca at the Well," "The Finding of Moses," "Joseph and his Brethren;" but Rocky Cañon was more particularly excited by the announcement that Polly Harkness would personate "Jephthah's Daughter." On the evening of the performance, however, it was found that this tableau had been withdrawn and another substituted, for reasons not given. Rocky Cañon, naturally indignant at this omission to represent native talent, indulged in a hundred wild surmises. But it was generally believed that Jack Filgee's revengeful animosity to the Reverend Mr. Withholder was at the bottom of it. Jack, as usual, smiled inanely, but nothing was to be got from him. It was not until a few days later, when another incident crowned the climax of these mysteries, that a full disclosure came from his lips.

One morning a flaming poster was displayed at Rocky Cañon, with a charming picture of the "Sacramento Pet" in the briefest of skirts, disporting with a tambourine before a goat garlanded with flowers, who bore, however, an undoubted likeness to Billy. The text in enormous letters, and bristling with points of admiration, stated that the "Pet" would appear as "Esmeralda," assisted by a performing goat, especially trained by the gifted actress. The goat would dance, play cards, and perform those tricks of magic familiar to the readers of Victor Hugo's beautiful story of the "Hunchback of Notre Dame," and finally knock down and overthrow the designing seducer, Captain Phœbus. The marvelous spectacle would be produced under the patronage of the Hon. Colonel Starbottle and the Mayor of Skinnerstown.

As all Rocky Cañon gathered open-mouthed around the poster, Jack demurely joined the group. Every eye was turned upon him.

"It don't look as if yer Polly was in *this* show, any more than she was in the tablows," said one, trying to conceal

his curiosity under a slight sneer. "She don't seem to be doin' any dancin'!"

"She never *did* any dancin'," said Jack, with a smile.

"Never *did!* Then what was all these yarns about her dancin' up at the pass?"

"It was the Sacramento Pet who did all the dancin'; Polly only *lent* the goat. Ye see, the Pet kinder took a shine to Billy arter he bowled Starbottle over thet day at the hotel, and she thought she might teach him tricks. So she *did*, doing all her teachin' and stage-rehearsin' up there at the pass, so 's to be outer sight, and keep this thing dark. She bribed Polly to lend her the goat and keep her secret, and Polly never let on a word to anybody but me."

"Then it was the Pet that Yuba Bill saw dancin' from the coach?"

"Yes."

"And that yer artist from New York painted as an 'Imp and Satire'?"

"Yes."

"Then that 's how Polly did n't show up in them tablows at Skinnerstown? It was Withholder who kinder smelt a rat, eh? and found out it was only a theayter gal all along that did the dancin'?"

"Well, you see," said Jack, with affected hesitation, "thet 's another yarn. I don't know mebbe ez I oughter tell it. Et ain't got anything to do with this advertisement o' the Pet, and might be rough on old man Withholder! Ye must n't ask me, boys."

But there was that in his eye, and above all in this lazy procrastination of the true humorist when he is approaching his climax, which rendered the crowd clamorous and unappeasable. They *would* have the story!

Seeing which, Jack leaned back against a rock with great gravity, put his hands in his pockets, looked discontentedly at the ground, and began: "You see, boys, old Parson

Withholder had heard all these yarns about Polly and thet trick-goat, and he kinder reckoned that she might do for some one of his tablows. So he axed her if she 'd mind standin' with the goat and a tambourine for Jephthah's Daughter, at about the time when old Jeph comes home, sailin' in and vowin' he 'll kill the first thing he sees, — jest as it is in the Bible story. Well, Polly did n't like to say it was n't *her* that performed with the goat, but the Pet, for thet would give the Pet dead away; so Polly agrees to come thar with the goat and rehearse the tablow. Well, Polly 's thar, a little shy; and Billy, — you bet *he 's* all thar and ready for the fun; but the darned fool who plays Jephthah ain't worth shucks, and when *he* comes in he does nothin' but grin at Polly and seem skeert at the goat. This makes old Withholder jest wild, and at last he goes on the platform hisself to show them how the thing oughter be done. So he comes bustlin' and prancin' in, and ketches sight o' Polly dancin' in with the goat to welcome him; and then he clasps his hands — so — and drops on his knees, and hangs down his head — so — and sez, 'Me chyld! me vow! Oh, heavens!' But jest then Billy — who 's gettin' rather tired o' all this foolishness — kinder slues round on his hind legs, and ketches sight o' the parson!" Jack paused a moment, and thrusting his hands still deeper in his pockets said lazily, "I don't know if you fellers have noticed how much old Withholder looks like Billy?"

There was a rapid and impatient chorus of "Yes! yes!" and "Go on!".

"Well," continued Jack, "when Billy sees Withholder kneelin' thar with his head down, he gives a kind o' joyous leap and claps his hoofs together, ez much ez to say, 'I 'm on in this scene,' drops his own head, and jest lights out for the parson!"

"And butts him clean through the side scenes into the street," interrupted a delighted auditor.

But Jack's face never changed. "Ye think so?" he said gravely. "But thet 's jest whar ye slip up; and thet 's jest whar Billy slipped up!" he added slowly. "Mebbe ye 've noticed, too, thet the parson 's built kinder solid about the head and shoulders. It mought hev be'n thet, or thet Billy did n't get a fair start, but thet goat went down on his fore legs like a shot, and the parson gave one heave, and jest scooted him off the platform! Then the parson reckoned thet this yer 'tablow' had better be left out, as thar did n't seem to be any other man who could play Jephthah, and it was n't dignified for *him* to take the part. But the parson allowed thet it might be a great moral lesson to Billy!"

And it *was*, for from that moment Billy never attempted to butt again. He performed with great docility later on in the Pet's engagement at Skinnerstown; he played a distinguished rôle throughout the provinces; he had had the advantages of Art from "the Pet," and of Simplicity from Polly, but only Rocky Cañon knew that his real education had come with his first rehearsal with the Reverend Mr. Withholder.

THE MAN AT THE SEMAPHORE

In the early days of the Californian immigration, on the extremest point of the sandy peninsula, where the bay of San Francisco debouches into the Pacific, there stood a semaphore telegraph. Tossing its black arms against the sky, — with its back to the Golden Gate and that vast expanse of sea whose nearest shore was Japan, — it signified to another semaphore further inland the "rigs" of incoming vessels, by certain uncouth signs, which were again passed on to Telegraph Hill, San Francisco, where they reappeared on a third semaphore, and read to the initiated "schooner," "brig," "ship," or "steamer." But all homesick San Francisco had learned the last sign, and on certain days of the month every eye was turned to welcome those gaunt arms widely extended at right angles, which meant "sidewheel steamer" (the only steamer which carried the mails) and "letters from home." In the joyful reception accorded to that herald of glad tidings, very few thought of the lonely watcher on the sand dunes who dispatched them, or even knew of that desolate station.

For desolate it was beyond description. The Presidio, with its voiceless, dismounted cannon and empty embrasures hidden in a hollow, and the Mission Dolores, with its crumbling walls and belfry tower lost in another, made the *ultima thule* of all San Francisco wandering. The Cliff House and Fort Point did not then exist; from Black Point the curving line of shore of "Yerba Buena" — or San Francisco — showed only a stretch of glittering wind-swept sand dunes, interspersed with straggling gullies of half-buried black "scrub oak." The long six months' summer

sun fiercely beat upon it from the cloudless sky above; the long six months' trade winds fiercely beat upon it from the west; the monotonous roll-call of the long Pacific surges regularly beat upon it from the sea. Almost impossible to face by day through sliding sands and buffeting winds, at night it was impracticable through the dense sea-fog that stole softly through the Golden Gate at sunset. Thence, until morning, sea and shore were a trackless waste, bounded only by the warning thunders of the unseen sea. The station itself, a rudely built cabin, with two windows, — one furnished with a telescope, — looked like a heap of driftwood, or a stranded wreck left by the retiring sea; the semaphore, — the only object for leagues, — lifted above the undulating dunes, took upon itself various shapes, more or less gloomy, according to the hour or weather, — a blasted tree, the masts and clinging spars of a beached ship, a dismantled gallows; or, with the background of a golden sunset across the Gate, and its arms extended at right angles, to a more hopeful fancy it might have seemed the missionary Cross, which the enthusiast Portala lifted on that heathen shore a hundred years before.

Not that Dick Jarman — the solitary station keeper — ever indulged this fancy. An escaped convict from one of her Britannic Majesty's penal colonies, a "stowaway" in the hold of an Australian ship, he had landed penniless in San Francisco, fearful of contact with his more honest countrymen already there, and liable to detection at any moment. Luckily for him, the English immigration consisted mainly of gold-seekers *en route* to Sacramento and the southern mines. He was prudent enough to resist the temptation to follow them, and accepted the post of semaphore keeper, — the first work offered him, — which the meanest immigrant, filled with dreams of gold, would have scorned. His employers asked him no questions, and demanded no references; his post could be scarcely deemed one of trust, —

there was no property for him to abscond with but the telescope; he was removed from temptation and evil company in his lonely waste; his duties were as mechanical as the instrument he worked, and interruption of them would be instantly known at San Francisco. For this he would receive his board and lodging and seventy-five dollars a month, — a sum to be ridiculed in those "flush days," but which seemed to the broken-spirited and half-famished stowaway a princely independence.

And then there was rest and security! He was free from that torturing anxiety and fear of detection which had haunted him night and day for three months. The ceaseless vigilance and watchful dread he had known since his escape, he could lay aside now. The rude cabin on the sand dune was to him as the long-sought cave to some hunted animal. It seemed impossible that any one would seek him there. He was spared alike the contact of his enemies or the shame of recognizing even a friendly face, until by each he would be forgotten. From his coign of vantage on that desolate waste, and with the aid of his telescope, no stranger could approach within two or three miles of his cabin without undergoing his scrutiny. And at the worst, if he was pursued here, before him was the trackless shore and the boundless sea!

And at times there was a certain satisfaction in watching, unseen and in perfect security, the decks of passing ships. With the aid of his glass he could mingle again with the world from which he was debarred, and gloomily wonder who among those passengers knew their solitary watcher, or had heard of his deeds; it might have made him gloomier had he known that in those eager faces turned towards the golden haven there was little thought of anything but themselves. He tried to read in faces on board the few outgoing ships the record of their success with a strange envy. They were returning home! *Home!* For some-

times — but seldom — he thought of his own home and his past. It was a miserable past of forgery and embezzlement that had culminated a career of youthful dissipation and self-indulgence, and shut him out forever from the staid old English cathedral town where he was born. He knew that his relations believed and wished him dead. He thought of this past with little pleasure, but with little remorse. Like most of his stamp, he believed it was ill-luck, chance, somebody else's fault, but never his own responsible action. He would not repent; he would be wiser only. And he would not be retaken — alive!

Two or three months passed in this monotonous duty, in which he partly recovered his strength and his nerves. He lost his furtive, restless, watchful look; the bracing sea air and the burning sun put into his face the healthy tan and the uplifted frankness of a sailor. His eyes grew keener from long scanning of the horizon; he knew where to look for sails, from the creeping coastwise schooner to the far-rounding merchantman from Cape Horn. He knew the faint line of haze that indicated the steamer long before her masts and funnels became visible. He saw no soul except the solitary boatman of the little "plunger," who landed his weekly provisions at a small cove hard by. The boatman thought his secretiveness and reticence only the surliness of his nation, and cared little for a man who never asked for the news, and to whom he brought no letters. The long nights which wrapped the cabin in sea-fog, and at first seemed to heighten the exile's sense of security, by degrees, however, became monotonous, and incited an odd restlessness, which he was wont to oppose by whiskey, — allowed as a part of his stores, — which, while it dulled his sensibilities, he, however, never permitted to interfere with his mechanical duties.

He had been there five months, and the hills on the opposite shore between Tamalpais were already beginning

to show their russet yellow sides. One bright morning he was watching the little fleet of Italian fishing-boats hovering in the bay. This was always a picturesque spectacle, perhaps the only one that relieved the general monotony of his outlook. The quaint lateen sails of dull red, or yellow, showing against the sparkling waters, and the red caps or handkerchiefs of the fishermen, might have attracted even a more abstracted man. Suddenly one of the larger boats tacked, and made directly for the little cove where his weekly plunger used to land. In an instant he was alert and suspicious. But a close examination of the boat through his glass satisfied him that it contained, in addition to the crew, only two or three women, apparently the family of the fisherman. As it ran up on the beach and the entire party disembarked, he could see it was merely a careless, peaceable invasion, and he thought no more about it. The strangers wandered about the sands, gesticulating and laughing; they brought a pot ashore, built a fire, and cooked a homely meal. He could see that from time to time the semaphore — evidently a novelty to them — had attracted their attention; and having occasion to signal the arrival of a bark, the working of the uncouth arms of the instrument drew the children in half-frightened curiosity towards it, although the others held aloof, as if fearful of trespassing upon some work of the government, no doubt secretly guarded by the police. A few mornings later he was surprised to see upon the beach, near the same locality, a small heap of lumber which had evidently been landed in the early morning fog. The next day an old tent appeared on the spot, and the men, evidently fishermen, began the erection of a rude cabin beside it. Jarman had been long enough there to know that it was government land, and that these manifestly humble "squatters" upon it would not be interfered with for some time to come. He began to be uneasy again; it was true they were fully half a mile

from him, and they were foreigners; but might not their reckless invasion of the law attract others, in this lawless country, to do the same? It ought to be stopped. For once Richard Jarman sided with legal authority.

But when the cabin was completed, it was evident from what he saw of its rude structure that it was only a temporary shelter for the fisherman's family and the stores, and refitting of the fishing-boat, more convenient to them than the San Francisco wharves. The beach was utilized for the mending of nets and sails, and thus became half picturesque. In spite of the keen northwestern trades, the cloudless, sunshiny mornings tempted these southerners back to their native *al fresco* existence; they not only basked in the sun, but many of their household duties, and even the mysteries of their toilet, were performed in the open air. They did not seem to care to penetrate into the desolate region behind them; their half-amphibious habit kept them near the water's edge, and Richard Jarman, after taking his limited walks for the first few mornings in another direction, found it no longer necessary to avoid the locality, and even forgot their propinquity.

But one morning, as the fog was clearing away and the sparkle of the distant sea was beginning to show from his window, he rose from his belated breakfast to fetch water from the "breaker" outside, which had to be replenished weekly from Sancelito, as there was no spring in his vicinity. As he opened the door, he was inexpressibly startled by the figure of a young woman standing in front of it, who, however, half fearfully, half laughingly withdrew before him. But his own manifest disturbance apparently gave her courage.

"I jess was looking at that thing," she said bashfully, pointing to the semaphore.

He was still more astonished, for, looking at her dark eyes and olive complexion, he had expected her to speak

Italian or broken English. And, possibly because for a long time he had seen and known little of women, he was quite struck with her good looks. He hesitated, stammered, and then said: —

"Won't you come in?"

She drew back still farther and made a rapid gesture of negation with her head, her hand, and even her whole lithe figure. Then she said, with a decided American intonation: —

"No, sir."

"Why not?" said Jarman mechanically.

The girl sidled up against the cabin, keeping her eyes fixed on Jarman with a certain youthful shrewdness.

"Oh, you know!" she said.

"I really do not. Tell me why."

She drew herself up against the wall a little proudly, though still youthfully, with her hands behind her.

"I ain't that kind of girl," she said simply.

The blood rushed to Jarman's cheeks. Dissipated and abandoned as his life had been, small respecter of women as he was, he was shocked and shamed. Knowing too, as he did, how absorbed he was in other things, he was indignant, because not guilty.

"Do as you please, then," he said shortly, and reëntered the cabin. But the next moment he saw his error in betraying an irritation that was open to misconstruction. He came out again, scarcely looking at the girl, who was lounging away.

"Do you want me to explain to you how the thing works?" he said indifferently. "I can't show you unless a ship comes in."

The girl's eyes brightened softly as she turned to him.

"Do tell me," she said, with an anticipatory smile and flash of white teeth. "Won't you?"

She certainly was very pretty and simple, in spite of her

late speech. Jarman briefly explained to her the movements of the semaphore arms and their different significance. She listened with her capped head a little on one side like an attentive bird, and her arms unconsciously imitating the signs. Certainly, for all that she *spoke* like an American, her gesticulation was Italian.

"And then," she said triumphantly when he paused, "when the sailors see that sign up they know they are coming in the harbor."

Jarman smiled, as he had not smiled since he had been there. He corrected this mistake of her eager haste to show her intelligence, and, taking the telescope, pointed out the other semaphore, — a thin black outline on a distant inland hill. He then explained how *his* signs were repeated by that instrument to San Francisco.

"My! Why, I always allowed that was only the cross stuck up in the Lone Mountain Cemetery," she said.

"You are a Catholic?"

"I reckon."

"And you are an Italian?"

"Father is, but mother was a 'Merikan, same as me. Mother's dead."

"And your father is the fisherman yonder?"

"Yes, — but," with a look of pride, "he's got the biggest boat of any."

"And only you and your family are ashore here?"

"Yes, and sometimes Mark." She laughed an odd little laugh.

"Mark? Who's he?" he asked quickly.

He had not noticed the sudden coquettish pose and half-affected bashfulness of the girl; he was thinking only of the possibility of detection by strangers.

"Oh, he is Marco Franti, but I call him 'Mark.' It's the same name, you know, and it makes him mad," said the girl, with the same suggestion of archness and coquetry.

But all this was lost on Jarman.

"Oh, another Italian," he said, relieved. She turned away a little awkwardly when he added, "But you have n't told me *your* name, you know."

"Cara."

"Cara, — that 's 'dear' in Italian, is n't it?" he said, with a reminiscence of the opera and a half smile.

"Yes," she said a little scornfully, "but it means Carlotta, — Charlotte, you know. Some girls call me Charley," she said hurriedly.

"I see — Cara — or Carlotta Franti."

To his surprise she burst into a peal of laughter.

"I reckon not *yet*. Franti is Mark's name, not mine. Mine is Murano, — Carlotta Murano. Good-by." She moved away, then stopped suddenly and said, "I 'm comin' again some time when the thing is working," and with a nod of her head ran away. He looked after her; could see the outlines of her youthful figure in her slim cotton gown, — limp and clinging in the damp sea air, and the sudden revelation of her bare ankles thrust stockingless into canvas shoes.

He went back into his cabin, when presently his attention was engrossed by an incoming vessel. He made the signals, half expecting, almost hoping, that the girl would return to watch him. But her figure was already lost in the sand dunes. Yet he fancied he still heard the echoes of her voice and his own in this cabin which had so long been dumb and voiceless, and he now started at every sound. For the first time he became aware of the dreadful disorder and untidiness of its uninvaded privacy. He could scarcely believe he had been living with his stove, his bed, and cooking utensils all in one corner of the barnlike room, and he began to put them "to rights" in a rough, hard formality, strongly suggestive of his convict experience. He rolled up his blankets into a hard cylinder at the head of his cot. He scraped out

his kettles and saucepans, and even "washed down" the floor, afterwards sprinkling clean dry sand, hot with the noonday sunshine, on its half-dried boards. In arranging these domestic details he had to change the position of a little mirror; and glancing at it for the first time in many days, he was dissatisfied with his straggling beard, — grown during his voyage from Australia, — and although he had retained it as a disguise, he at once shaved it off, leaving only a mustache, and revealing a face from which a healthier life and out-of-door existence had removed the last traces of vice and dissipation. But he did not know it.

All the next day he thought of his fair visitor, and found himself often repeating her odd remark that she was "not that kind of girl," with a smile that was alternately significant or vacant. Evidently she could take care of herself, he thought, although her very good looks no doubt had exposed her to the rude attentions of fishermen or the common drift of San Francisco wharves. Perhaps this was why her father brought her here. When the day passed and she came not, he began vaguely to wonder if he had been rude to her. Perhaps he had taken her simple remark too seriously; perhaps she had expected he would only laugh, and had found him dull and stupid. Perhaps he had thrown away an opportunity. An opportunity for what? To renew his old life and habits? No, no! The horrors of his recent imprisonment and escape were still too fresh in his memory; he was not safe yet. Then he wondered if he had not grown spiritless and pigeon-livered in his solitude and loneliness. The next day he searched for her with his glass, and saw her playing with one of the children on the beach, — a very picture of child or nymph like innocence. Perhaps it was because she was not "that kind of girl" that she had attracted him. He laughed bitterly. Yes; that was very funny; he, an escaped convict, drawn towards honest, simple innocence! Yet he

knew — he was positive — he had not thought of any ill when he spoke to her. He took a singular, a ridiculous pride in and credit to himself for that. He repeated it incessantly to himself. Then what made her angry? Himself! The devil! Did he carry, then, the record of his past life forever in his face — in his speech — in his manners? The thought made him sullen. The next day he would not look towards the shore; it was wonderful what excitement and satisfaction he got out of that strange act of self-denial; it made the day seem full that had been so vacant before; yet he could not tell why or wherefore. He felt injured, but he rather liked it. Yet in the night he was struck with the idea that she might have gone back to San Francisco, and he lay awake longing for the morning light to satisfy him. Yet when the fog cleared, and from a nearer point, behind a sand dune, he discovered, by the aid of his glass, that she was seated on the sun-warmed sands combing out her long hair like a mermaid, he immediately returned to the cabin, and that morning looked no more that way. In the afternoon, there being no sails in sight, he turned aside from the bay and walked westward towards the ocean, halting only at the league-long line of foam which marked the breaking Pacific surges. Here he was surprised to see a little child, half-naked, following barefooted the creeping line of spume, or running after the detached and quivering scraps of foam that chased each other over the wet sand, and only a little further on, to come upon Cara herself, sitting with her elbows on her knees and her round chin in her hands, apparently gazing over the waste of waters before her. A sudden and inexplicable shyness overtook him. He hesitated, and stepped half-hidden into a gully between the sand dunes.

As yet he had not been observed; the young girl called to the child and, suddenly rising, threw off her red cap and shawl and quietly began to disrobe herself. A couple of

coarse towels were at her feet. Jarman instantly comprehended that she was going to bathe with the child. She undoubtedly knew as well as he did that she was safe in that solitude; that no one could intrude upon her privacy from the bay shore, nor from the desolate inland trail to the sea, without her knowledge. Of his own contiguity she had evidently taken no thought, believing him safely housed in his cabin beside the semaphore. She lifted her hands, and with a sudden movement shook out her long hair and let it fall down her back at the same moment that her unloosened blouse began to slip from her shoulders. Richard Jarman turned quickly and walked noiselessly and rapidly away, until the little hillock had shut out the beach.

His retreat was as sudden, unreasoning, and unpremeditated as his intrusion. It was not like himself, he knew, and yet it was as perfectly instinctive and natural as if he had intruded upon a sister. In the South Seas he had seen native girls diving beside the vessels for coins, but they had provoked no such instinct as that which possessed him now. More than that, he swept a quick, wrathful glance along the horizon on either side, and then, mounting a remote hillock which still hid him from the beach, he sat there and kept watch and ward. From time to time the strong sea-breeze brought him the sound of infantine screams and shouts of girlish laughter from the unseen shore; he only looked the more keenly and suspiciously for any wandering trespasser, and did not turn his head. He lay there nearly half an hour, and when the sounds had ceased, rose and made his way slowly back to the cabin. He had not gone many yards before he heard the twitter of voices and smothered laughter behind him. He turned; it was Cara and the child, — a girl of six or seven. Cara's face was rosy, — possibly from her bath, and possibly from some shamefaced consciousness. He slackened his pace, and as they ranged beside him said, "Good-morning!"

"Lord!" said Cara, stifling another laugh, "we did n't know you were around; we thought you were always tending your telegraph, did n't we, Lucy?" (to the child, who was convulsed with mirth and sheepishness). "Why, we've been taking a wash in the sea." She tried to gather up her long hair, which had been left to stray over her shoulders and dry in the sunlight, and even made a slight pretense of trying to conceal the wet towels they were carrying.

Jarman did not laugh. "If you had told me," he said gravely, "I could have kept watch for you with my glass while you were there. I could see further than you."

"Tould you see *us?*" asked the little girl, with hopeful vivacity.

"No!" said Jarman, with masterly evasion. "There are little sandhills between this and the beach."

"Then how tould other people see us?" persisted the child.

Jarman could see that the older girl was evidently embarrassed, and changed the subject. "I sometimes go out," he said, "when I can see there are no vessels in sight, and I take my glass with me. I can always get back in time to make signals. I thought, in fact," he said, glancing at Cara's brightening face, "that I might get as far as your house on the shore some day." To his surprise, her embarrassment suddenly seemed to increase, although she had looked relieved before, and she did not reply. After a moment she said abruptly: —

"Did you ever see the sea-lions?"

"No," said Jarman.

"Not the big ones on Seal Rock, beyond the cliffs?" continued the girl, in real astonishment.

"No," repeated Jarman. "I never walked in that direction." He vaguely remembered that they were a curiosity which sometimes attracted parties thither, and for that reason he had avoided the spot.

"Why, I have sailed all around the rock in father's boat," continued Cara, with importance. "That 's the best way to see 'em, and folks from 'Frisco sometimes takes a sail out there just on purpose, — it 's too sandy to walk or drive there. But it 's only a step from here. Look here!" she said suddenly, and frankly opening her fine eyes upon him. "I 'm going to take Lucy there to-morrow, and I 'll show you." Jarman felt his cheeks flush quickly with a pleasure that embarrassed him. "It won't take long," added Cara, mistaking his momentary hesitation, "and you can leave your telegraph alone. Nobody will be there, so no one will see you and nobody know it."

He would have gone then, anyway, he knew, yet in his absurd self-consciousness he was glad that her last suggestion had relieved him of a sense of reckless compliance. He assented eagerly, when with a wave of her hand, a flash of her white teeth, and the same abruptness she had shown at their last parting, she caught Lucy by the arm and darted away in a romping race to her dwelling. Jarman started after her. He had not wanted to go to her father's house particularly, but why was *she* evidently as averse to it? With the subtle pleasure that this admission gave him there was a faint stirring of suspicion.

It was gone when he found her and Lucy the next morning, radiant with the sunshine, before his door. The restraint of their previous meetings had been removed in some mysterious way, and they chatted gayly as they walked towards the cliffs. She asked him frankly many questions about himself, why he had come there, and if he "was n't lonely;" she answered frankly — I fear much more frankly than he answered her — the many questions he asked her about herself and her friends. When they reached the cliffs they descended to the beach, which they found deserted. Before them — it seemed scarce a pistol shot from the shore — arose a high, broad rock, beaten at its base by

the long Pacific surf, on which a number of shapeless animals were uncouthly disporting. This was Seal Rock, the goal of their journey.

Yet after a few moments they no longer looked at it, but seated on the sand, with Lucy gathering shells at the water's edge, they continued their talk. Presently the talk became eager confidences, and then, — there were long and dangerous lapses of silence, when both were fain to make perfunctory talk with Lucy on the beach. After one of those silences Jarman said: —

"Do you know I rather thought yesterday you did n't want me to come to your father's house. Why was that?"

"Because Marco was there," said the girl frankly.

"What had *he* to do with it?" said Jarman abruptly.

"He wants to marry me."

"And do you want to marry *him?*" said Jarman quickly.

"No," said the girl passionately.

"Why don't you get rid of him, then?"

"I can't, he 's hiding here, — he 's father's friend."

"Hiding? What 's he been doing?"

"Stealing. Stealing gold-dust from miners. I never cared for him anyway. And I hate a thief!"

She looked up quickly. Jarman had risen to his feet, his face turned to sea.

"What are you looking at?" she said wonderingly.

"A ship," said Jarman in a strange, hoarse voice. "I must hurry back and signal. I 'm afraid I have n't even time to walk with you, — I must run for it. Good-by!"

He turned without offering his hand and ran hurriedly in the direction of the semaphore.

Cara, discomfited, turned her black eyes to the sea. But it seemed empty as before, no sail, no ship on the horizon line, only a little schooner slowly beating out of the Gate.

Ah, well! It no doubt was there, — that sail, — though she could not see it; how keen and far-seeing his handsome, honest eyes were! She heaved a little sigh, and, calling Lucy to her side, began to make her way homeward. But she kept her eyes on the semaphore; it seemed to her the next thing to seeing him, — this man she was beginning to love. She waited for the gaunt arms to move with the signal of the vessel he had seen. But, strange to say, it was motionless. He must have been mistaken.

All this, however, was driven from her mind in the excitement that she found on her return thrilling her own family. They had been warned that a police boat with detectives on board had been dispatched from San Francisco to the cove. Luckily, they had managed to convey the fugitive Franti on board a coastwise schooner, — Cara started as she remembered the one she had seen beating out of the Gate, — and he was now safe from pursuit. Cara felt relieved; at the same time she felt a strange joy at her heart, which sent the conscious blood to her cheek. She was not thinking of the escaped Marco, but of Jarman. Later, when the police boat arrived, — whether the detectives had been forewarned of Marco's escape or not, — they contented themselves with a formal search of the little fishing-hut and departed. But their boat remained lying off the shore.

That night Cara tossed sleeplessly on her bed; she was sorry she had ever spoken of Marco to Jarman. It was unnecessary now; perhaps he disbelieved her and thought she loved Marco; perhaps that was the reason of his strange and abrupt leave-taking that afternoon. She longed for the next day; she could tell him everything now.

Towards morning she slept fitfully, but was awakened by the sound of voices on the sands outside the hut. Its flimsy structure, already warped by the fierce day-long sun, allowed her through chinks and crevices not only to recognize the voices of the detectives, but to hear distinctly what

her out. [illegible] rest [illegible] reckless.

"[illegible] the same man?" asked a second voice.

"[illegible]" answered the first. "He was [illegible] disappeared [illegible] We knew [illegible] when we [illegible] description of the [illegible] we knew that we had spotted [illegible] the [illegible] offered for his capture."

"But that was five months ago. Why didn't you nab him then?"

"Could n't. For we could n't hold him without the extradition papers from Australia. We sent for 'em; they 're due to-day or to-morrow in the mail steamer."

"But he might have got away at any time!"

"He could n't without our knowing it. Don't you see? Every time the signals went up, we in San Francisco knew he was at his post. We had him safe, but here in these [illegible] as if he 'd been under lock and key in 'Frisco. He was his own keeper, and reported to us."

"But since you 're here and expect the papers to-morrow, why don't you 'stop' him now?"

"Because there is n't a judge in San Francisco that would hold him a moment unless he had those extradition papers before him. He 'd be discharged, and escape."

"Then what are you going to do?"

"As soon as the steamer is signaled in 'Frisco, we 'll board her in the bay, get the papers, and drop down upon him."

"I see; and as he 's the signal man, the darned fool" —

"Will give the signal himself."

The laugh that followed was so cruel that the young girl shuddered. But the next moment she slipped from the bed, erect, pale, and determined.

The voices seemed gradually to retreat. She dressed herself hurriedly, and passed noiselessly through the room of her still sleeping parent, and passed out. A gray fog was lifting slowly over the sands and sea, and the police boat was gone. She no longer hesitated, but ran quickly in the direction of Jarman's cabin. As she ran, her mind seemed to be swept clear of all illusion and fancy; she saw plainly everything that had happened; she knew the mystery of Jarman's presence here, — the secret of his life, — the dreadful cruelty of her remark to him, — the man that she knew now she loved. The sun was painting the black arms of the semaphore as she toiled over the last stretch of sand and knocked loudly at the door. There was no reply. She knocked again; the cabin was silent. Had he already fled? — and without seeing her and knowing all! She tried the handle of the door; it yielded; she stepped boldly into the room, with his name upon her lips. He was lying fully dressed upon his couch. She ran eagerly to his side and stopped. It needed only a single glance at his congested face, his lips parted with his heavy breath, to see that the man was hopelessly, helplessly drunk!

Yet even then, without knowing that it was her thoughtless speech which had driven him to seek this foolish oblivion of remorse and sorrow, she saw only his *helplessness*. She tried in vain to rouse him; he only muttered a few incoherent words and sank back again. She looked despairingly around. Something must be done; the steamer might be visible at any moment. Ah, yes, — the telescope! She seized it and swept the horizon. There was a faint streak of haze against the line of sea and sky, abreast the Golden Gate. He had once told her what it meant. It *was* the steamer! A sudden thought leaped into her clear and active brain. If the police boat should chance to see that haze too, and saw no warning signal from the semaphore, they would suspect something. That signal must

be made, *but not the right one!* She remembered quickly how he had explained to her the difference between the signals for a coasting steamer and the one that brought the mails. At that distance the police boat could not detect whether the semaphore's arms were extended to perfect right angles for the mail steamer, or if the left arm slightly deflected for a coasting steamer. She ran out to the windlass and seized the crank. For a moment it defied her strength; she redoubled her efforts: it began to creak and groan, the great arms were slowly uplifted and the signal made.

But the familiar sounds of the moving machinery had pierced through Jarman's sluggish consciousness as no other sound in heaven or earth could have done, and awakened him to the one dominant sense he had left, — the habit of duty. She heard him roll from the bed with an oath, stumble to the door, and saw him dash forward with an affrighted face, and plunge his head into a bucket of water. He emerged from it pale and dripping, but with the full light of reason and consciousness in his eyes. He started when he saw her; even then she would have fled, but he caught her firmly by the wrist.

Then with a hurried, trembling voice she told him all and everything. He listened in silence, and only at the end raised her hand gravely to his lips.

"And now," she added tremulously, "you must fly — quick — at once; or it will be too late!"

But Richard Jarman walked slowly to the door of his cabin, still holding her hand, and said quietly, pointing to his only chair: —

"Sit down; we must talk first."

What they said was never known, but a few moments later they left the cabin, Jarman carrying in a small bag all his possessions, and Cara leaning on his arm. An hour later the priest of the Mission Dolores was called upon to

unite in matrimony a frank, honest-looking sailor and an Italian, gypsy-looking girl. There were many hasty unions in those days, and the Holy Church was only too glad to be able to give them its legal indorsement. But the good Padre was a little sorry for the honest sailor, and gave the girl some serious advice.

The San Francisco papers the next morning threw some dubious light upon the matter in a paragraph headed, "Another Police Fiasco."

"We understand that the indefatigable police of San Francisco, after ascertaining that Marco Franti, the noted gold-dust thief, was hiding on the shore near the Presidio, proceeded there with great solemnity, and arrived, as usual, a few hours after their man had escaped. But the climax of incapacity was reached when, as it is alleged, the sweetheart of the absconding Franti, and daughter of a brother fisherman, eloped still later, and joined her lover under the very noses of the police. The attempt of the detectives to excuse themselves at headquarters by reporting that they were also on the track of an alleged escaped Sydney Duck was received with the derision and skepticism it deserved, as it seemed that these worthies mistook the mail steamer, which they should have boarded to get certain extradition papers, for a coasting steamer."

. . . . . .

It was not until four years later that Murano was delighted to recognize in the husband of his long-lost daughter a very rich cattle-owner in Southern California, called Jarman; but he never knew that he had been an escaped convict from Sydney, who had lately received a full pardon through the instrumentality of divers distinguished people in Australia.

SEE YUP

I DON'T suppose that his progenitors ever gave him that name, or, indeed, that it was a *name* at all; but it was currently believed that — as pronounced "See *Up*" — it meant that lifting of the outer angle of the eye common to the Mongolian. On the other hand, I had been told that there was an old Chinese custom of affixing some motto or legend, or even a sentence from Confucius, as a sign above their shops, and that two or more words, which might be merely equivalent to "Virtue is its own reward," or "Riches are deceitful," were believed by the simple Californian miner to be the name of the occupant himself. Howbeit, "See Yup" accepted it with the smiling patience of his race, and never went by any other. If one of the tunnelmen always addressed him as "Brigadier-General," "Judge," or "Commodore," it was understood to be only the American fondness for ironic title, and was never used except in personal conversation. In appearance he looked like any other Chinaman, wore the ordinary blue cotton blouse and white drawers of the Sampan coolie, and, in spite of the apparent cleanliness and freshness of these garments, always exhaled that singular medicated odor — half opium, half ginger — which we recognized as the common "Chinese smell."

Our first interview was characteristic of his patient quality. He had done my washing for several months, but I had never yet seen him. A meeting at last had become necessary to correct his impressions regarding "buttons" — which he had seemed to consider as mere excrescences, to be removed like superfluous dirt from soiled linen. I had expected him to call at my lodgings, but he had not yet made his appearance.

One day, during the noontide recess of the little frontier school over which I presided, I returned rather early. Two or three of the smaller boys, who were loitering about the school-yard, disappeared with a certain guilty precipitation that I suspected for the moment, but which I presently dismissed from my mind. I passed through the empty schoolroom to my desk, sat down, and began to prepare the coming lessons. Presently I heard a faint sigh. Looking up, to my intense concern, I discovered a solitary Chinaman whom I had overlooked, sitting in a rigid attitude on a bench with his back to the window. He caught my eye and smiled sadly, but without moving.

"What are you doing here?" I asked sternly.

"Me washee shilts; me talkee 'buttons.'"

"Oh! you're See Yup, are you?"

"Allee same, John."

"Well, come here."

I continued my work, but he did not move.

"Come here, hang it! Don't you understand?"

"Me shabbee, 'comme yea.' But me no shabbee Mellican boy, who catchee me, allee same. *You* 'comme yea'—*you* shabbee?"

Indignant, but believing that the unfortunate man was still in fear of persecution from the mischievous urchins whom I had evidently just interrupted, I put down my pen and went over to him. Here I discovered, to my surprise and mortification, that his long pigtail was held hard and fast by the closed window behind him, which the young rascals had shut down upon it, after having first noiselessly fished it outside with a hook and line. I apologized, opened the window, and released him. He did not complain, although he must have been fixed in that uncomfortable position for some minutes, but plunged at once into the business that brought him there.

"But *why* did n't you come to my lodgings?" I asked.

He smiled sadly but intelligently.

"Mishtel Bally [Mr. Barry, my landlord] he owee me five dollee fo washee, washee. He no payee me. He say he knock hellee outee me allee time I come fo payee. So me no come *housee*, me come *schoolee*. Shabbee? Mellican boy no good, but not so big as Mellican man. No can hurtee Chinaman so much. Shabbee?"

Alas! I knew that this was mainly true. Mr. James Barry was an Irishman, whose finer religious feelings revolted against paying money to a heathen. I could not find it in my heart to say anything to See Yup about the buttons; indeed, I spoke in complimentary terms about the gloss of my shirts, and I think I meekly begged him to come again for my washing. When I went home I expostulated with Mr. Barry, but succeeded only in extracting from him the conviction that I was one of "thim black Republican fellys that worshiped naygurs." I had simply made an enemy of him. But I did not know that, at the same time, I had made a friend of See Yup!

I became aware of this a few days later, by the appearance on my desk of a small pot containing a specimen of camellia japonica in flower. I knew the school-children were in the habit of making presents to me in this furtive fashion, — leaving their own nosegays of wild flowers, or perhaps a cluster of roses from their parents' gardens, — but I also knew that this exotic was too rare to come from them. I remembered that See Yup had a Chinese taste for gardening, and a friend, another Chinaman, who kept a large nursery in the adjoining town. But my doubts were set at rest by the discovery of a small roll of red rice-paper containing my washing-bill, fastened to the camellia stalk. It was plain that this mingling of business and delicate gratitude was clearly See Yup's own idea. As the finest flower was the topmost one, I plucked it for wearing, when I found, to my astonishment, that it was simply wired to the stalk. This

led me to look at the others, which I found also wired! More than that, they seemed to be an inferior flower, and exhaled that cold, earthy odor peculiar to the camellia, even, as I thought, to an excess. A closer examination resulted in the discovery that, with the exception of the first flower I had plucked, they were one and all ingeniously constructed of thin slices of potato, marvelously cut to imitate the vegetable waxiness and formality of the real flower. The work showed an infinite and almost pathetic patience in detail, yet strangely incommensurate with the result, admirable as it was. Nevertheless, this was also like See Yup. But whether he had tried to deceive me, or whether he only wished me to admire his skill, I could not say. And as his persecution by my scholars had left a balance of consideration in his favor, I sent him a warm note of thanks, and said nothing of my discovery.

As our acquaintance progressed, I became frequently the recipient of other small presents from him: a pot of preserves of a quality I could not purchase in shops, and whose contents in their crafty, gingery dissimulation so defied definition that I never knew whether they were animal, vegetable, or mineral; two or three hideous Chinese idols, "for luckee," and a diabolical firework with an irregular spasmodic activity that would sometimes be prolonged until the next morning. In return, I gave him some apparently hopeless oral lessons in English, and certain sentences to be copied, which he did with marvelous precision. I remember one instance when this peculiar faculty of imitation was disastrous in result. In setting him a copy, I had blurred a word, which I promptly erased, and then traced the letters more distinctly over the scratched surface. To my surprise, See Yup triumphantly produced *his* copy with the erasion itself carefully imitated, and, in fact, much more neatly done than mine.

In our confidential intercourse, I never seemed to really

get nearer to him. His sympathy and simplicity appeared like his flowers — to be a good-humored imitation of my own. I am satisfied that his particularly soulless laugh was not derived from any amusement he actually felt, yet I could not say it was forced. In his accurate imitations, I fancied he was only trying to evade any responsibility of his own. *That* devolved upon his taskmaster! In the attention he displayed when new ideas were presented to him, there was a slight condescension, as if he were looking down upon them from his three thousand years of history.

"Don't you think the electric telegraph wonderful?" I asked one day.

"Velly good for Mellican man," he said, with his aimless laugh; "plenty makee him jump!"

I never could tell whether he had confounded it with electro-galvanism, or was only satirizing our American haste and feverishness. He was capable of either. For that matter, we knew that the Chinese themselves possessed some means of secretly and quickly communicating with one another. Any news of good or ill import to their race was quickly disseminated through the settlement before *we* knew anything about it. An innocent basket of clothes from the wash, sent up from the river-bank, became in some way a library of information; a single slip of rice-paper, aimlessly fluttering in the dust of the road, had the mysterious effect of diverging a whole gang of coolie tramps away from our settlement.

When See Yup was not subject to the persecutions of the more ignorant and brutal, he was always a source of amusement to all, and I cannot recall an instance when he was ever taken seriously. The miners found diversions even in his alleged frauds and trickeries, whether innocent or retaliatory, and were fond of relating with great gusto his evasion of the Foreign Miners' Tax. This was an oppressive measure aimed principally at the Chinese, who humbly

worked the worn-out "tailings" of their Christian fellow miners. It was stated that See Yup, knowing the difficulty — already alluded to — of identifying any particular Chinaman by *name*, conceived the additional idea of confusing recognition by intensifying the monotonous facial expression. Having paid his tax himself to the collector, he at once passed the receipt to his fellows, so that the collector found himself confronted in different parts of the settlement with the receipt and the aimless laugh of, apparently, See Yup himself. Although we all knew that there were a dozen Chinamen or more at work at the mines, the collector never was able to collect the tax from more than *two*, — See Yup and one See Yin, — and so great was *their* facial resemblance that the unfortunate official for a long time hugged himself with the conviction that he had made See Yup *pay twice*, and withheld the money from the government! It is very probable that the Californian's recognition of the sanctity of a joke, and his belief that "cheating the government was only cheating himself," largely accounted for the sympathies of the rest of the miners.

But these sympathies were not always unanimous.

One evening I strolled into the bar-room of the principal saloon, which, so far as mere upholstery and comfort went, was also the principal house in the settlement. The first rains had commenced; the windows were open, for the influence of the southwest trades penetrated even this far-off mountain mining settlement, but, oddly enough, there was a fire in the large central stove, around which the miners had collected, with their steaming boots elevated on a projecting iron railing that encircled it. They were not attracted by the warmth, but the stove formed a social pivot for gossip, and suggested that mystic circle dear to the gregarious instinct. Yet they were decidedly a despondent group. For some moments the silence was broken only by a gasp, a sigh, a muttered oath, or an impatient change of

position. There was nothing in the fortunes of the settlement nor in their own individual affairs to suggest this gloom. The singular truth was that they were, one and all, suffering from the pangs of dyspepsia.

Incongruous as such a complaint might seem to their healthy environment, — their outdoor life, their daily exercise, the healing balsam of the mountain air, their enforced temperance in diet, and the absence of all enervating pleasures, — it was nevertheless the incontestable fact. Whether it was the result of the nervous, excitable temperament which had brought them together in this feverish hunt for gold; whether it was the quality of the tinned meats or half-cooked provisions they hastily bolted, begrudging the time it took to prepare and to consume them; whether they too often supplanted their meals by tobacco or whiskey, the singular physiological truth remained that these young, finely selected adventurers, living the lives of the natural, aboriginal man, and looking the picture of health and strength, actually suffered more from indigestion than the pampered dwellers of the cities. The quantity of "patent medicines," "bitters," "pills," "panaceas," and "lozenges" sold in the settlement almost exceeded the amount of the regular provisions whose effects they were supposed to correct. The sufferers eagerly scanned advertisements and placards. There were occasional "runs" on new "specifics," and general conversation eventually turned into a discussion of their respective merits. A certain childlike faith and trust in each new remedy was not the least distressing and pathetic of the symptoms of these grown-up, bearded men.

"Well, gentlemen," said Cyrus Parker, glancing around at his fellow sufferers, "ye kin talk of your patent medicines, and I 've tackled 'em all, but only the other day I struck suthin' that I 'm goin' to hang on to, you bet."

Every eye was turned moodily to the speaker, but no one said anything.

"And I did n't get it out er advertisements, nor off of circulars. I got it out er my head, just by solid thinking," continued Parker.

"What was it, Cy?" said one unsophisticated and inexperienced sufferer.

Instead of replying, Parker, like a true artist, knowing he had the ear of his audience, dramatically flashed a question upon them.

"Did you ever hear of a Chinaman having dyspepsy?"

"Never heard he had sabe enough to hev *anything*," said a scorner.

"No, but *did* ye?" insisted Parker.

"Well, no!" chorused the group. They were evidently struck with the fact.

"Of course you did n't," said Parker triumphantly. "'Cos they *ain't*. Well, gentlemen, it did n't seem to me the square thing that a pesky lot o' yellow-skinned heathens should be built different to a white man, and never know the tortur' that a Christian feels; and one day, arter dinner, when I was just a-lyin' flat down on the bank, squirmin', and clutching the short grass to keep from yellin', who should go by but that pizened See Yup, with a grin on his face.

"'Mellican man plenty playee to him Joss after eatin',' sez he; 'but Chinaman smellee punk, allee same, and no hab got.'

"I knew the slimy cuss was just purtendin' he thought I was prayin' to my Joss, but I was that weak I had n't stren'th, boys, to heave a rock at him. Yet it gave me an idea."

"What was it?" they asked eagerly.

"I went down to his shop the next day, when he was alone, and I was feeling mighty bad, and I got hold of his pigtail, and I allowed I 'd stuff it down his throat if he did n't tell me what he meant. Then he took a piece of

punk and lit it, and put it under my nose, and, darn my skin, gentlemen, you migh' n't believe me, but in a minute I felt better, and after a whiff or two I was all right."

"Was it pow'ful strong, Cy?" asked the inexperienced one.

"No," said Parker, "and that 's just what 's got me. It was a sort o' dreamy, spicy smell, like a hot night. But as I could n't go 'round 'mong you boys with a lighted piece o' punk in my hand, ez if I was settin' off Fourth of July firecrackers, I asked him if he could n't fix me up suthin' in another shape that would be handier to use when I was took bad, and I 'd reckon to pay him for it like ez I 'd pay for any other patent medicine. So he fixed me up this."

He put his hand in his pocket, and drew out a small red paper which, when opened, disclosed a pink powder. It was gravely passed around the group.

"Why, it smells and tastes like ginger," said one.

"It is only ginger!" said another scornfully.

"Mebbe it is, and mebbe it is n't," returned Cy Parker stoutly. "Mebbe it 's only my fancy. But if it 's the sort o' stuff to bring on that fancy, and that fancy *cures* me, it 's all the same. I 've got about two dollars' worth o' that fancy or that ginger, and I 'm going to stick to it. You hear me!" And he carefully put it back in his pocket.

At which criticisms and gibes broke forth. If he (Cy Parker), a white man, was going to "demean himself" by consulting a Chinese quack, he 'd better buy up a lot o' idols and stand 'em up around his cabin. If he had that sort o' confidences with See Yup, he ought to go to work with him on his cheap tailings, and be fumigated all at the same time. If he 'd been smoking an opium pipe, instead of smelling punk, he ought to be man enough to confess it. Yet it was noticeable that they were all very anxious to examine the packet again, but Cy Parker was alike indifferent to demand or entreaty.

A few days later I saw Abe Wynford, one of the party, coming out of See Yup's wash-house. He muttered something in passing about the infamous delay in sending home his washing, but did not linger long in conversation. The next day I met another miner *at* the wash-house, but *he* lingered so long on some trifling details that I finally left him there alone with See Yup. When I called upon Poker Jack of Shasta, there was a singular smell of incense in *his* cabin, which he attributed to the very resinous quality of the fir logs he was burning. I did not attempt to probe these mysteries by any direct appeal to See Yup himself: I respected his reticence; indeed, if I had not, I was quite satisfied that he would have lied to me. Enough that his wash-house was well patronized, and he was decidedly "getting on."

It might have been a month afterwards that Dr. Duchesne was setting a broken bone in the settlement, and after the operation was over, had strolled into the Palmetto Saloon. He was an old army surgeon, much respected and loved in the district, although perhaps a little feared for the honest roughness and military precision of his speech. After he had exchanged salutations with the miners in his usual hearty fashion, and accepted their invitation to drink, Cy Parker, with a certain affected carelessness which did not, however, conceal a singular hesitation in his speech, began:

"I 've been wantin' to ask ye a question, Doc, — a sort o' darned fool question, ye know, — nothing in the way of consultation, don't you see, though it 's kinder in the way o' your purfeshun. Sabe?"

"Go on, Cy," said the doctor good-humoredly, "this is my dispensary hour."

"Oh! it ain't anything about symptoms, Doc, and there ain't anything the matter with me. It 's only just to ask ye if ye happened to know anything about the medical practice of these yer Chinamen?"

"*I* don't know," said the doctor bluntly, "and I don't know *anybody* who does."

There was a sudden silence in the bar, and the doctor, putting down his glass, continued with slight professional precision: —

"You see, the Chinese know nothing of anatomy from personal observation. Autopsies and dissection are against their superstitions, which declare the human body sacred, and are consequently never practiced."

There was a slight movement of inquiring interest among the party, and Cy Parker, after a meaning glance at the others, went on half aggressively, half apologetically: —

"In course, they ain't surgeons like you, Doc, but that don't keep them from having their own little medicines, just as dogs eat grass, you know. Now I want to put it to you, as a fa'r-minded man, if you mean ter say that, jest because those old women who sarve out yarbs and spring medicines in families don't know anything of anatomy, they ain't fit to give us their simple and nat'ral medicines?"

"But the Chinese medicines are not simple or natural," said the doctor coolly.

"Not simple?" echoed the party, closing round him.

"I don't mean to say," continued the doctor, glancing around at their eager, excited faces with an appearance of wonder, "that they are positively noxious, unless taken in large quantities, for they are not drugs at all, but I certainly should not call them 'simple.' Do *you* know what they principally are?"

"Well, no," said Parker cautiously, "perhaps not *exactly*."

"Come a little closer, and I'll tell you."

Not only Parker's head but the others were bent over the counter. Dr. Duchesne uttered a few words in a tone inaudible to the rest of the company. There was a profound silence, broken at last by Abe Wynford's voice: —

"Ye kin pour me out about three fingers o' whiskey, Barkeep. I 'll take it straight."

"Same to me," said the others.

The men gulped down their liquor; two of them quietly passed out. The doctor wiped his lips, buttoned his coat, and began to draw on his riding-gloves.

"I 've heerd," said Poker Jack of Shasta, with a faint smile on his white face, as he toyed with the last drops of liquor in his glass, "that the darned fools sometimes smell punk as a medicine, eh?"

"Yes, *that's* comparatively decent," said the doctor reflectively. "It 's only sawdust mixed with a little gum and formic acid."

"Formic acid? Wot 's that?"

"A very peculiar acid secreted by ants. It is supposed to be used by them offensively in warfare — just as the skunk, eh?"

But Poker Jack of Shasta had hurriedly declared that he wanted to speak to a man who was passing, and had disappeared. The doctor walked to the door, mounted his horse, and rode away. I noticed, however, that there was a slight smile on his bronzed, impassive face. This led me to wonder if he was entirely ignorant of the purpose for which he had been questioned, and the effect of his information. I was confirmed in the belief by the remarkable circumstance that nothing more was said of it; the incident seemed to have terminated there, and the victims made no attempt to revenge themselves on See Yup. That they had one and all, secretly and unknown to one another, patronized him, there was no doubt; but, at the same time, as they evidently were not sure that Dr. Duchesne had not hoaxed them in regard to the quality of See Yup's medicines, they knew that an attack on the unfortunate Chinaman would in either case reveal their secret and expose them to the ridicule of their brother miners. So

the matter dropped, and See Yup remained master of the situation.

Meantime he was prospering. The coolie gang he worked on the river, when not engaged in washing clothes, were "picking over" the "tailings," or refuse of gravel, left on abandoned claims by successful miners. As there was no more expense attending this than in stone-breaking or rag-picking, and the feeding of the coolies, which was ridiculously cheap, there was no doubt that See Yup was reaping a fair weekly return from it; but as he sent his receipts to San Francisco through coolie messengers, after the Chinese custom, and did not use the regular express company, there was no way of ascertaining the amount. Again, neither See Yup nor his fellow countrymen ever appeared to have any money about them. In ruder times and more reckless camps, raids were often made by ruffians on their cabins or their traveling gangs, but never with any pecuniary result. This condition, however, it seemed was destined to change.

One Saturday See Yup walked into Wells, Fargo & Co.'s Express office with a package of gold-dust, which, when duly weighed, was valued at five hundred dollars. It was consigned to a Chinese company in San Francisco. When the clerk handed See Yup a receipt, he remarked casually: —

"Washing seems to pay, See Yup."

"Washee velly good pay. You wantee washee, John?" said See Yup eagerly.

"No, no," said the clerk, with a laugh. "I was only thinking five hundred dollars would represent the washing of a good many shirts."

"No leplesent washee shilts at all! Catchee gold-dust when washee tailings. Shabbee?"

The clerk *did* "shabbee," and lifted his eyebrows. The next Saturday See Yup appeared with another package, worth about four hundred dollars, directed to the same consignee.

"Did n't pan out quite so rich this week, eh?" said the clerk engagingly.

"No," returned See Yup impassively; "next time he payee more."

When the third Saturday came, with the appearance of See Yup and four hundred and fifty dollars' worth of gold-dust, the clerk felt he was no longer bound to keep the secret. He communicated it to others, and in twenty-four hours the whole settlement knew that See Yup's coolie company were taking out an average of four hundred dollars per week from the refuse and tailings of the old abandoned Palmetto claim!

The astonishment of the settlement was profound. In earlier days jealousy and indignation at the success of these degraded heathens might have taken a more active and aggressive shape, and it would have fared ill with See Yup and his companions. But the settlement had become more prosperous and law-abiding; there were one or two Eastern families and some foreign capital already there, and its jealousy and indignation were restricted to severe investigation and legal criticism. Fortunately for See Yup, it was an old-established mining law that an abandoned claim and its tailings became the property of whoever chose to work it. But it was alleged that See Yup's company had in reality "struck a lead," — discovered a hitherto unknown vein or original deposit of gold, not worked by the previous company, — and, having failed legally to declare it by pre-emption and public registry, in their foolish desire for secrecy, had thus forfeited their right to the property. A surveillance of their working, however, did not establish this theory; the gold that See Yup had sent away was of the kind that might have been found in the tailings overlooked by the late Palmetto owners. Yet it was a very large yield for mere refuse.

"Them Palmetto boys were mighty keerless after they 'd

made their big 'strike' and got to work on the vein, and I reckon they threw a lot of gold away," said Cy Parker, who remembered their large-handed recklessness in the "flush days." "On'y that *we* did n't think it was white man's work to rake over another man's leavin's, we might hev had what them derned Chinamen hev dropped into. Tell ye what, boys, we 've been a little too 'high and mighty,' and we 'll hev to climb down."

At last the excitement reached its climax, and diplomacy was employed to effect what neither intimidation nor espionage could secure. Under the pretense of desiring to buy out See Yup's company, a select committee of the miners was permitted to examine the property and its workings. They found the great bank of stones and gravel, representing the cast-out débris of the old claim, occupied by See Yup and four or five plodding, automatic coolies. At the end of two hours the committee returned to the saloon bursting with excitement. They spoke under their breath, but enough was gathered to satisfy the curious crowd that See Yup's pile of tailings was rich beyond their expectations. The committee had seen with their own eyes gold taken out of the sand and gravel to the amount of twenty dollars in the two short hours of their examination. And the work had been performed in the stupidest, clumsiest, yet *patient* Chinese way. What might not white men do with better appointed machinery! A syndicate was at once formed. See Yup was offered twenty thousand dollars if he would sell out and put the syndicate in possession of the claim in twenty-four hours. The Chinaman received the offer stolidly. As he seemed inclined to hesitate, I am grieved to say that it was intimated to him that if he declined he might be subject to embarrassing and expensive legal proceedings to prove his property, and that companies would be formed to "prospect" the ground on either side of his heap of tailings. See Yup at last consented, with

the proviso that the money should be paid in gold into the hands of a Chinese agent in San Francisco on the day of the delivery of the claim. The syndicate made no opposition to this characteristic precaution of the Chinaman. It was like them not to travel with money, and the implied uncomplimentary suspicion of danger from the community was overlooked. See Yup departed the day that the syndicate took possession. He came to see me before he went. I congratulated him upon his good fortune; at the same time, I was embarrassed by the conviction that he was unfairly forced into a sale of his property at a figure far below its real value.

I think differently now.

At the end of the week it was said that the new company cleared up about three hundred dollars. This was not so much as the community had expected, but the syndicate was apparently satisfied, and the new machinery was put up. At the end of the next week the syndicate were silent as to their returns. One of them made a hurried visit to San Francisco. It was said that he was unable to see either See Yup or the agent to whom the money was paid. It was also noticed that there was no Chinaman remaining in the settlement. Then the fatal secret was out.

The heap of tailings had probably never yielded the See Yup company more than twenty dollars a week, the ordinary wage of such a company. See Yup had conceived the brilliant idea of "booming" it on a borrowed capital of five hundred dollars in gold-dust, which he *openly* transmitted by express to his confederate and creditor in San Francisco, who in turn *secretly* sent it back to See Yup by coolie messengers, to be again openly transmitted to San Francisco. The package of gold-dust was thus passed backwards and forwards between debtor and creditor, to the grave edification of the express company and the fatal curiosity of the settlement. When the syndicate had gorged

the bait thus thrown out, See Yup, on the day the self-invited committee inspected the claim, promptly "salted" the tailings by *conscientiously distributing the gold-dust over it* so deftly that it appeared to be its natural composition and yield.

I have only to bid farewell to See Yup, and close this reminiscence of a misunderstood man, by adding the opinion of an eminent jurist in San Francisco, to whom the facts were submitted: "So clever was this alleged fraud, that it is extremely doubtful if an action would lie against See Yup in the premises, there being no legal evidence of the 'salting,' and none whatever of his actual allegation that the gold-dust was the *ordinary* yield of the tailings, that implication resting entirely with the committee who examined it under false pretense, and who subsequently forced the sale by intimidation."

THE BOOM IN THE "CALAVERAS CLARION"

THE editorial sanctum of the "Calaveras Clarion" opened upon the "composing-room" of that paper on the one side, and gave apparently upon the rest of Calaveras County upon the other. For, situated on the very outskirts of the settlement and the summit of a very steep hill, the pines sloped away from the editorial windows to the long valley of the South Fork and — infinity. The little wooden building had invaded Nature without subduing it. It was filled night and day with the murmur of pines and their fragrance. Squirrels scampered over its roof when it was not preoccupied by woodpeckers, and a printer's devil had once seen a nest-building blue jay enter a window in the composing-room, flutter before one of the slanting type-cases with an air of deliberate selection, and then fly off with a vowel in its bill.

Amidst these sylvan surroundings the temporary editor of the "Clarion" sat at his sanctum, reading the proofs of an editorial. As he was occupying that position during a six weeks' absence of the *bona fide* editor and proprietor, he was consequently reading the proof with some anxiety and responsibility. It had been suggested to him by certain citizens that the "Clarion" needed a firmer and more aggressive policy towards the Bill before the Legislature for the wagon road to the South Fork. Several Assembly men had been "got at" by the rival settlement of Liberty Hill, and a scathing exposure and denunciation of such methods was necessary. The interests of their own township were also to be "whooped up." All this had been vigorously explained to him, and he had grasped the spirit,

if not always the facts, of his informants. It is to be feared, therefore, that he was perusing his article more with reference to its vigor than his own convictions. And yet he was not so greatly absorbed as to be unmindful of the murmur of the pines without, his half-savage environment, and the lazy talk of his sole companions, — the foreman and printer in the adjoining room.

"Bet your life! I've always said that a man *inside* a newspaper office could hold his own agin any outsider that wanted to play rough or tried to raid the office! Thar's the press, and thar's the printin' ink and roller! Folks talk a heap o' the power o' the Press! — I tell ye, ye don't half know it. Why, when old Kernel Fish was editin' the 'Sierra Banner,' one o' them bullies that he'd lampooned in the 'Banner' fought his way past the Kernel in the office, into the composin'-room, to wreck everythin' and 'pye' all the types. Spoffrel — ye don't remember Spoffrel? — little red-haired man? — was foreman. Spoffrel fended him off with the roller and got one good dab inter his eyes that blinded him, and then Spoffrel sorter skirmished him over to the press, — a plain lever just like ours, — whar the locked-up form of the inside was still a-lyin'! Then, quick as lightnin', Spoffrel tilts him over agin it, and *he* throws out his hand and ketches hold o' the form to steady himself, when Spoffrel just runs the form and the hand under the press and down with the lever! And that held the feller fast as grim death! And when at last he begs off, and Spoff lets him loose, the hull o' that 'ere lampooning article he objected to was printed right onto the skin o' his hand! Fact, and it would n't come off, either."

"Gosh, but I'd like to hev seen it," said the printer. "There ain't any chance, I reckon, o' such a sight here. The boss don't take no risks lampoonin', and he" (the editor knew he was being indicated by some unseen gesture of the unseen workman) "ain't that style."

"Ye never kin tell," said the foreman didactically, "what might happen! I've known editors to get into a fight jest for a little innercent bedevilin' o' the opposite party. Sometimes for a misprint. Old man Pritchard of the 'Argus' oncet had a hole blown through his arm because his proof-reader had called Colonel Starbottle's speech an 'ignominious' defense, when the old man hed written 'ingenuous' defense."

The editor paused in his proof-reading. He had just come upon the sentence: "We cannot congratulate Liberty Hill — in its superior elevation — upon the ignominious silence of the representative of all Calaveras when this infamous Bill was introduced." He referred to his copy. Yes! He had certainly written "ignominious," — that was what his informants had suggested. But was he sure they were right? He had a vague recollection, also, that the representative alluded to — Senator Bradley — had fought two duels, and was a "good" though somewhat impulsive shot! He might alter the word to "ingenuous" or "ingenious," either would be finely sarcastic, but then — there was his foreman, who would detect it! He would wait until he had finished the entire article. In that occupation he became oblivious of the next room, of a silence, a whispered conversation, which ended with a rapping at the door and the appearance of the foreman in the doorway.

"There's a man in the office who wants to see the editor," he said.

"Show him in," replied the editor briefly. He was, however, conscious that there was a singular significance in his foreman's manner, and an eager apparition of the other printer over the foreman's shoulder.

"He's carryin' a shot-gun, and is a man twice as big as you be," said the foreman gravely.

The editor quickly recalled his own brief and as yet

blameless record in the "Clarion." "Perhaps," he said tentatively, with a gentle smile, "he's looking for Captain Brush" (the absent editor).

"I told him all that," said the foreman grimly, "and he said he wanted to see the man in charge."

In proportion as the editor's heart sank his outward crest arose. "Show him in," he said loftily.

"We *kin* keep him out," suggested the foreman, lingering a moment; "me and him," indicating the expectant printer behind him, "is enough for that."

"Show him up," repeated the editor firmly.

The foreman withdrew; the editor seated himself and again took up his proof. The doubtful word "ignominious" seemed to stand out of the paragraph before him; it certainly *was* a strong expression! He was about to run his pencil through it when he heard the heavy step of his visitor approaching. A sudden instinct of belligerency took possession of him, and he wrathfully threw the pencil down.

The burly form of the stranger blocked the doorway. He was dressed like a miner, but his build and general physiognomy were quite distinct from the local variety. His upper lip and chin were clean-shaven, still showing the blue-black roots of the beard which covered the rest of his face and depended in a thick fleece under his throat. He carried a small bundle tied up in a silk handkerchief in one hand, and a "shot-gun" in the other, perilously at half-cock. Entering the sanctum, he put down his bundle and quietly closed the door behind him. He then drew an empty chair towards him and dropped heavily into it with his gun on his knees. The editor's heart dropped almost as heavily, although he quite composedly held out his hand.

"Shall I relieve you of your gun?"

"Thank ye, lad — noa. It 's moor coomfortable wi'

me, and it's main dangersome to handle on the half-cock. That's why I did n't leave 'im on the horse outside!"

At the sound of his voice and occasional accent a flash of intelligence relieved the editor's mind. He remembered that twenty miles away, in the illimitable vista from his windows, lay a settlement of English north-country miners, who, while faithfully adopting the methods, customs, and even slang of the Californians, retained many of their native peculiarities. The gun he carried on his knee, however, was evidently part of the Californian imitation.

"Can I do anything for you?" said the editor blandly.

"Ay! I've coom here to bill ma woife."

"I — don't think I understand," hesitated the editor, with a smile.

"I've coom here to get ye to put into your paper a warnin', a notiss, that onless she returns to my house in four weeks, I'll have nowt to do wi' her again."

"Oh!" said the editor, now perfectly reassured, "you want an advertisement? That's the business of the foreman; I'll call him." He was rising from his seat when the stranger laid a heavy hand on his shoulder and gently forced him down again.

"Noa, lad! I don't want noa foreman nor understrappers to take this job, I want to talk it over wi' you. *Sabe?* My woife she bin up and awaa these six months. We had a bit of difference, that ain't here nor there, but she skedaddled outer my house. I want to give her fair warning, and let her know I ain't payin' any debts o' hers arter this notiss, and I ain't takin' her back arter four weeks from date."

"I see," said the editor glibly. "What's your wife's name?"

"Eliza Jane Dimmidge."

"Good," continued the editor, scribbling on the paper before him; "something like this will do: 'Whereas my

wife, Eliza Jane Dimmidge, having left my bed and board without just cause or provocation, this is to give notice that I shall not be responsible for any debts of her contracting on or after this date.' "

"Ye must be a lawyer," said Mr. Dimmidge admiringly.

It was an old enough form of advertisement, and the remark showed incontestably that Mr. Dimmidge was not a native; but the editor smiled patronizingly and went on: "'And I further give notice that if she does not return within the period of four weeks from this date, I shall take such proceedings for relief as the law affords.' "

"Coom, lad, I did n't say *that*."

"But you said you would n't take her back."

"Ay."

"And you can't prevent her without legal proceedings. She 's your wife. But you need n't take proceedings, you know. It 's only a warning."

Mr. Dimmidge nodded approvingly. "That 's so."

"You 'll want it published for four weeks, until date?" asked the editor.

"Mebbe longer, lad."

The editor wrote "till forbid" in the margin of the paper and smiled.

"How big will it be?" said Mr. Dimmidge.

The editor took up a copy of the "Clarion" and indicated about an inch of space. Mr. Dimmidge's face fell.

"I want it bigger, — in large letters, like a play-card," he said. "That 's no good for a warning."

"You can have half a column or a whole column if you like," said the editor airily.

"I 'll take a whole one," said Mr. Dimmidge simply.

The editor laughed. "Why! it would cost you a hundred dollars."

"I 'll take it," repeated Mr. Dimmidge.

"But," said the editor gravely, "the same notice in a small space will serve your purpose and be quite legal."

"Never you mind that, lad! It's the looks of the thing I'm arter, and not the expense. I'll take that column."

The editor called in the foreman and showed him the copy. "Can you display that so as to fill a column?"

The foreman grasped the situation promptly. It would be big business for the paper. "Yes," he said meditatively, "that bold-faced election type will do it."

Mr. Dimmidge's face brightened. The expression "bold-faced" pleased him. "That's it! I told you. I want to bill her in a portion of the paper."

"I might put in a cut," said the foreman suggestively; "something like this." He took a venerable woodcut from the case. I grieve to say it was one which, until the middle of the present century, was common enough in the newspaper offices in the Southwest. It showed the running figure of a negro woman carrying her personal property in a knotted handkerchief slung from a stick over her shoulder, and was supposed to represent "a fugitive slave."

Mr. Dimmidge's eyes brightened. "I'll take that, too. It's a little dark-complected for Mrs. D., but it will do. Now roon away, lad," he said to the foreman, as he quietly pushed him into the outer office again and closed the door. Then, facing the surprised editor, he said, "Theer's another notiss I want ye to put in your paper; but that's atween *us*. Not a word to *them*," he indicated the banished foreman with a jerk of his thumb. "*Sabe?* I want you to put this in another part o' your paper, quite innocent-like, ye know." He drew from his pocket a gray wallet, and taking out a slip of paper read from it gravely, "'If this should meet the eye of R. B., look out for M. J. D. He is on your track. When this you see write a line to E. J. D., Elktown Post Office.' I want this to go in as 'Personal

and Private' — *sabe?* — like them notisses in the big 'Frisco papers."

"I see," said the editor, laying it aside. "It shall go in the same issue in another column."

Apparently Mr. Dimmidge expected something more than this reply, for after a moment's hesitation he said with an odd smile: —

"Ye ain't seein' the meanin' o' that, lad?"

"No," said the editor lightly; "but I suppose R. B. does, and it is n't intended that any one else should."

"Mebbe it is, and mebbe it is n't," said Mr. Dimmidge, with a self-satisfied air. "I don't mind saying atween us that R. B. is the man as I 've suspicioned as havin' something to do with my wife goin' away; and ye see, if he writes to E. J. D. — that 's my wife's initials — at Elktown, *I'll* get that letter and so make sure."

"But suppose your wife goes there first, or sends?"

"Then I 'll ketch her or her messenger. Ye see?"

The editor did not see fit to oppose any argument to this phenomenal simplicity, and Mr. Dimmidge, after settling his bill with the foreman, and enjoining the editor to the strictest secrecy regarding the origin of the "personal notice," took up his gun and departed, leaving the treasury of the "Clarion" unprecedentedly enriched, and the editor to his proofs.

The paper duly appeared the next morning with the column advertisement, the personal notice, and the weighty editorial on the wagon road. There was a singular demand for the paper, the edition was speedily exhausted, and the editor was proportionately flattered, although he was surprised to receive neither praise nor criticism from his subscribers. Before evening, however, he learned to his astonishment that the excitement was caused by the column advertisement. Nobody knew Mr. Dimmidge, nor his domestic infelicities, and the editor and foreman, being equally

in the dark, took refuge in a mysterious and impressive evasion of all inquiry. Never since the last San Francisco Vigilance Committee had the office been so besieged. The editor, foreman, and even the apprentice were button-holed and "treated" at the bar, but to no effect. All that could be learned was that it was a *bona fide* advertisement, for which one hundred dollars had been received! There were great discussions and conflicting theories as to whether the value of the wife, or the husband's anxiety to get rid of her, justified the enormous expense and ostentatious display. She was supposed to be an exceedingly beautiful woman by some, by others a perfect Sycorax; in one breath Mr. Dimmidge was a weak, uxorious spouse, wasting his substance on a creature who did not care for him, and in another a maddened, distracted, henpecked man, content to purchase peace and rest at any price. Certainly, never was advertisement more effective in its publicity, or cheaper in proportion to the circulation it commanded. It was copied throughout the whole Pacific slope; mighty San Francisco papers described its size and setting under the attractive headline, "How they Advertise a Wife in the Mountains!" It reappeared in the Eastern journals, under the title of "Whimsicalities of the Western Press." It was believed to have crossed to England as a specimen of "Transatlantic Savagery." The real editor of the "Clarion" awoke one morning, in San Francisco, to find his paper famous. Its advertising columns were eagerly sought for; he at once advanced the rates. People bought successive issues to gaze upon this monumental record of extravagance. A singular idea, which, however, brought further fortune to the paper, was advanced by an astute critic at the Eureka Saloon. "My opinion, gentlemen, is that the whole blamed thing is a bluff! There ain't no Mr. Dimmidge; there ain't no Mrs. Dimmidge; there ain't no desertion! The whole rotten thing is an *advertisement* o' suthin'! Ye 'll find afore

ye get through with it that that there wife won't come back until that blamed husband buys Somebody's Soap, or treats her to Somebody's particular Starch or Patent Medicine! Ye jest watch and see!" The idea was startling, and seized upon the mercantile mind. The principal merchant of the town, and purveyor to the mining settlements beyond, appeared the next morning at the office of the "Clarion." "Ye would n't mind puttin' this 'ad' in a column alongside o' the Dimmidge one, would ye?" The young editor glanced at it, and then, with a serpent-like sagacity, veiled, however, by the suavity of the dove, pointed out that the original advertiser might think it called his *bona fides* into question and withdraw his advertisement. "But if we secured you by an offer of double the amount per column?" urged the merchant. "That," responded the *locum tenens*, "was for the actual editor and proprietor in San Francisco to determine. He would telegraph." He did so. The response was, "Put it in." Whereupon in the next issue, side by side with Mr. Dimmidge's protracted warning, appeared a column with the announcement, in large letters, "*WE* HAVE N'T LOST ANY WIFE, but WE are prepared to furnish the following goods at a lower rate than any other advertiser in the county," followed by the usual price list of the merchant's wares. There was an unprecedented demand for that issue. The reputation of the "Clarion," both as a shrewd advertising medium and a comic paper, was established at once. For a few days the editor waited with some apprehension for a remonstrance from the absent Dimmidge, but none came. Whether Mr. Dimmidge recognized that this new advertisement gave extra publicity to his own, or that he was already on the track of the fugitive, the editor did not know. The few curious citizens who had, early in the excitement, penetrated the settlement of the English miners twenty miles away in search of information, found that Mr. Dimmidge

had gone away, and that Mrs. Dimmidge had *never* resided there with him!

Six weeks passed. The limit of Mr. Dimmidge's advertisement had been reached, and, as it was not renewed, it had passed out of the pages of the "Clarion," and with it the merchant's advertisement in the next column. The excitement had subsided, although its influence was still felt in the circulation of the paper and its advertising popularity. The temporary editor was also nearing the limit of his incumbency, but had so far participated in the good fortune of the "Clarion" as to receive an offer from one of the San Francisco dailies.

It was a warm night, and he was alone in his sanctum. The rest of the building was dark and deserted, and his solitary light, flashing out through the open window, fell upon the nearer pines and was lost in the dark, indefinable slope below. He had reached the sanctum by the rear, and a door which he also left open to enjoy the freshness of the aromatic air. Nor did it in the least mar his privacy. Rather the solitude of the great woods without seemed to enter through that door and encompassed him with its protecting loneliness. There was occasionally a faint "peep" in the scant eaves, or a "pat-pat," ending in a frightened scurry across the roof, or the slow flap of a heavy wing in the darkness below. These gentle disturbances did not, however, interrupt his work on "The True Functions of the County Newspaper," the editorial on which he was engaged.

Presently a more distinct rustling against the straggling blackberry bushes beside the door attracted his attention. It was followed by a light tapping against the side of the house. The editor started and turned quickly towards the open door. Two outside steps led to the ground. Standing upon the lower one was a woman. The upper part of her figure, illuminated by the light from the door, was thrown into greater relief by the dark background of the

pines. Her face was unknown to him, but it was a pleasant one, marked by a certain good-humored determination.

"May I come in?" she said confidently.

"Certainly," said the editor. "I am working here alone because it is so quiet." He thought he would precipitate some explanation from her by excusing himself.

"That 's the reason why I came," she said, with a quiet smile.

She came up the next step and entered the room. She was plainly but neatly dressed, and now that her figure was revealed he saw that she was wearing a linsey-woolsey riding-skirt, and carried a serviceable raw-hide whip in her cotton-gauntleted hand. She took the chair he offered her and sat down sideways on it, her whip hand now also holding up her skirt, and permitting a hem of clean white petticoat and a smart, well-shaped boot to be seen.

"I don't remember to have had the pleasure of seeing you in Calaveras before," said the editor tentatively.

"No. I never was here before," she said composedly, "but you 've heard enough of me, I reckon. I 'm Mrs. Dimmidge." She threw one hand over the back of the chair, and with the other tapped her riding-whip on the floor.

The editor started. Mrs. Dimmidge! Then she was not a myth. An absurd similarity between her attitude with the whip and her husband's entrance with his gun six weeks before forced itself upon him and made her an invincible presence.

"Then you have returned to your husband?" he said hesitatingly.

"Not much!" she returned, with a slight curl of her lip.

"But you read his advertisement?"

"I saw that column of fool nonsense he put in your paper — ef that 's what you mean," she said with decision, "but I did n't come here to see *him* — but *you*."

The editor looked at her with a forced smile, but a vague misgiving. He was alone at night in a deserted part of the settlement, with a plump, self-possessed woman who had a contralto voice, a horsewhip, and — he could not help feeling — an evident grievance.

"To see me?" he repeated, with a faint attempt at gallantry. "You are paying me a great compliment, but really" —

"When I tell you I've come three thousand miles from Kansas straight here without stopping, ye kin reckon it's so," she replied firmly.

"Three thousand miles!" echoed the editor wonderingly.

"Yes. Three thousand miles from my own folks' home in Kansas, where six years ago I married Mr. Dimmidge, — a British furriner as could scarcely make himself understood in any Christian language! Well, he got round me and dad, allowin' he was a reg'lar out-and-out profeshnal miner, — had lived in mines ever since he was a boy; and so, not knowin' what kind o' mines, and dad just bilin' over with the gold fever, we were married and kem across the plains to Californy. He was a good enough man to look at, but it warn't three months before I discovered that he allowed a wife was no better nor a nigger slave, and he the master. That made me open my eyes; but then, as he did n't drink, and did n't gamble, and did n't swear, and was a good provider and laid by money, why, I shifted along with him as best I could. We drifted down the first year to Sonora, at Red Dog, where there was n't another woman. Well, I did the nigger slave business, — never stirring out o' the settlement, never seein' a town or a crowd o' decent people, — and he did the lord and master! We played that game for two years, and I got tired. But when at last he allowed he 'd go up to Elktown Hill, where there was a passel o' his countrymen at work, with never a sign o' any other folks, and leave me alone at Red Dog until he fixed up a place

for me at Elktown Hill, — I kicked! I gave him fair warning! I did as other nigger slaves did, — I ran away!"

A recollection of the wretched woodcut which Mr. Dimmidge had selected to personify his wife flashed upon the editor with a new meaning. Yet perhaps she had not seen it, and had only read a copy of the advertisement. What could she want? The "Calaveras Clarion," although a "Palladium" and a "Sentinel upon the Heights of Freedom" in reference to wagon roads, was not a redresser of domestic wrongs, — except through its advertising columns! Her next words intensified that suggestion.

"I've come here to put an advertisement in your paper."

The editor heaved a sigh of relief, as once before. "Certainly," he said briskly. "But that's another department of the paper, and the printers have gone home. Come to-morrow morning early."

"To-morrow morning I shall be miles away," she said decisively, "and what I want done has got to be done *now!* I don't want to see no printers; I don't want *anybody* to know I've been here but you. That's why I kem here at night, and rode all the way from Sawyer's Station, and would n't take the stagecoach. And when we've settled about the advertisement, I 'm going to mount my horse, out thar in the bushes, and scoot outer the settlement."

"Very good," said the editor resignedly. "Of course I can deliver your instructions to the foreman. And now — let me see — I suppose you wish to intimate in a personal notice to your husband that you've returned."

"Nothin' o' the kind!" said Mrs. Dimmidge coolly. "I want to placard him as he did me. I've got it all written out here. *Sabe?*"

She took from her pocket a folded paper, and spreading it out on the editor's desk, with a certain pride of authorship, read as follows: —

"Whereas my husband, Micah J. Dimmidge, having

given out that I have left his bed and board, — the same being a bunk in a log cabin and pork and molasses three times a day, — and having advertised that he 'd pay no debts of *my* contractin', — which, as thar ain't any, might be easier collected than debts of his own contractin', — this is to certify that unless he returns from Elktown Hill to his only home in Sonora in one week from date, payin' the cost of this advertisement, I 'll know the reason why. — Eliza Jane Dimmidge."

"Thar," she added, drawing a long breath, "put that in a column of the 'Clarion,' same size as the last, and let it work, and that 's all I want of you."

"A column ? " repeated the editor. "Do you know the cost is very expensive, and I *could* put it in a single paragraph ? "

"I reckon I kin pay the same as Mr. Dimmidge did for *his*," said the lady complacently. "I did n't see your paper myself, but the paper as copied it — one of them big New York dailies — said that it took up a whole column."

The editor breathed more freely; she had not seen the infamous woodcut which her husband had selected. At the same moment he was struck with a sense of retribution, justice, and compensation.

"Would you," he asked hesitatingly, — "would you like it illustrated — by a cut ? "

"With which ? "

"Wait a moment; I 'll show you."

He went into the dark composing-room, lit a candle, and rummaging in a drawer sacred to weather-beaten, old-fashioned electrotyped advertising symbols of various trades, finally selected one and brought it to Mrs. Dimmidge. It represented a bare and exceedingly stalwart arm wielding a large hammer.

"Your husband being a miner, — a quartz miner, — would that do ? " he asked. (It had been previously used

to advertise a blacksmith, a gold-beater, and a stone-mason.)

The lady examined it critically.

"It does look a little like Micah's arm," she said meditatively. "Well — you kin put it in."

The editor was so well pleased with his success that he must needs make another suggestion. "I suppose," he said ingenuously, "that you don't want to answer the 'Personal'?"

"'Personal'?" she repeated quickly, "what 's that? I ain't seen no 'Personal.'"

The editor saw his blunder. She, of course, had never seen Mr. Dimmidge's artful "Personal;" *that* the big dailies naturally had not noticed nor copied. But it was too late to withdraw now. He brought out a file of the "Clarion," and snipping out the paragraph with his scissors, laid it before the lady.

She stared at it with wrinkled brows and a darkening face.

"And *this* was in the same paper? — put in by Mr. Dimmidge?" she asked breathlessly.

The editor, somewhat alarmed, stammered "Yes." But the next moment he was reassured. The wrinkles disappeared, a dozen dimples broke out where they had been, and the determined, matter-of-fact Mrs. Dimmidge burst into a fit of rosy merriment. Again and again she laughed, shaking the building, startling the sedate, melancholy woods beyond, until the editor himself laughed in sheer vacant sympathy.

"Lordy!" she said at last, gasping, and wiping the laughter from her wet eyes. "I never thought of *that*."

"No," explained the editor smilingly; "of course you did n't. Don't you see, the papers that copied the big advertisement never saw that little paragraph, or if they did, they never connected the two together."

"Oh, it ain't that," said Mrs. Dimmidge, trying to regain

her composure and holding her sides. "It 's that blessed *dear* old dunderhead of a Dimmidge I 'm thinking of. That gets me. I see it all now. Only, sakes alive! I never thought *that* of him. Oh, it 's just too much!" and she again relapsed behind her handkerchief.

"Then I suppose you don't want to reply to it," said the editor.

Her laughter instantly ceased. "Don't I?" she said, wiping her face into its previous complacent determination. "Well, young man, I reckon that 's just what I *want* to do! Now, wait a moment; let 's see what he said," she went on, taking up and reperusing the "Personal" paragraph. "Well, then," she went on, after a moment's silent composition with moving lips, "you just put these lines in."

The editor took up his pencil.

"To Mr. M. J. Dimmidge. — Hope you 're still on R. B.'s tracks. Keep there! — E. J. D."

The editor wrote down the line, and then, remembering Mr. Dimmidge's voluntary explanation of *his* "Personal," waited with some confidence for a like frankness from Mrs. Dimmidge. But he was mistaken.

"You think that he — R. B. — or Mr. Dimmidge — will understand this?" he at last asked tentatively. "Is it enough?"

"Quite enough," said Mrs. Dimmidge emphatically. She took a roll of greenbacks from her pocket, selected a hundred-dollar bill and then a five, and laid them before the editor. "Young man," she said, with a certain demure gravity, "you 've done me a heap o' good. I never spent money with more satisfaction than this. I never thought much o' the 'power o' the Press,' as you call it, afore. But this has been a right comfortable visit, and I 'm glad I ketched you alone. But you understand one thing: this yer visit, and *who* I am, is betwixt you and me only."

"Of course I must say that the advertisement was *authorized*," returned the editor. "I 'm only the temporary editor. The proprietor is away."

"So much the better," said the lady complacently. "You just say you found it on your desk with the money; but don't you give me away."

"I can promise you that the secret of your personal visit is safe with me," said the young man, with a bow, as Mrs. Dimmidge rose. "Let me see you to your horse," he added. "It 's quite dark in the woods."

"I can see well enough alone, and it 's just as well you should n't know *how* I kem or *how* I went away. Enough for you to know that I 'll be miles away before that paper comes out. So stay where you are."

She pressed his hand frankly and firmly, gathered up her riding-skirt, slipped backwards to the door, and the next moment rustled away into the darkness.

Early the next morning the editor handed Mrs. Dimmidge's advertisement, and the woodcut he had selected, to his foreman. He was purposely brief in his directions, so as to avoid inquiry, and retired to his sanctum. In the space of a few moments the foreman entered with a slight embarrassment of manner.

"You 'll excuse my speaking to you, sir," he said, with a singular mixture of humility and cunning. "It 's no business of mine, I know; but I thought I ought to tell you that this yer kind o' thing won't pay any more, — it 's about played out!"

"I don't think I understand you," said the editor loftily, but with an inward misgiving. "You don't mean to say that a regular, actual advertisement" —

"Of course, I know all that," said the foreman, with a peculiar smile; "and I 'm ready to back you up in it, and so 's the boy; but it won't pay."

"It *has* paid a hundred and five dollars," said the editor,

taking the notes from his pocket; "so I 'd advise you to simply attend to your duty and set it up."

A look of surprise, followed, however, by a kind of pitying smile, passed over the foreman's face. "Of course, sir, *that 's* all right, and you know your own business; but if you think that the new advertisement will pay this time as the other one did, and whoop up another column from an advertiser, I 'm afraid you 'll slip up. It 's a little 'off color' now, — not 'up to date,' — if it ain't a regular 'back number,' as you 'll see."

"Meantime I 'll dispense with your advice," said the editor curtly, "and I think you had better let our subscribers and advertisers do the same, or the 'Clarion' might also be obliged to dispense with your *services*."

"I ain't no blab," said the foreman, in an aggrieved manner, "and I don't intend to give the show away even if it don't *pay*. But I thought I 'd tell you, because I know the folks round here better than you do."

He was right. No sooner had the advertisement appeared than the editor found that everybody believed it to be a sheer invention of his own to "once more boom" the "Clarion." If they had doubted *Mr.* Dimmidge, they utterly rejected *Mrs.* Dimmidge as an advertiser! It was a stale joke that nobody would follow up; and on the heels of this came a letter from the editor-in-chief.

My dear Boy, — You meant well, I know, but the second Dimmidge "ad" was a mistake. Still, it was a big bluff of yours to show the money, and I send you back your hundred dollars, hoping you won't "do it again." Of course you 'll have to keep the advertisement in the paper for two issues, just as if it were a real thing, and it 's lucky that there 's just now no pressure in our columns. You might have told a better story than that hogwash about your finding the "ad" and a hundred dollars lying

loose on your desk one morning. It was rather thin, and I don't wonder the foreman kicked.

The young editor was in despair. At first he thought of writing to Mrs. Dimmidge at the Elktown Post-Office, asking her to relieve him of his vow of secrecy; but his pride forbade. There was a humorous concern, not without a touch of pity, in the faces of his contributors as he passed; a few affected to believe in the new advertisement, and asked him vague, perfunctory questions about it. His position was trying, and he was not sorry when the term of his engagement expired the next week, and he left Calaveras to take his new position on the San Francisco paper.

He was standing in the saloon of the Sacramento boat when he felt a sudden heavy pressure on his shoulder, and looking round sharply, beheld not only the black-bearded face of Mr. Dimmidge, lit up by a smile, but beside it the beaming, buxom face of Mrs. Dimmidge, overflowing with good-humor. Still a little sore from his past experience, he was about to address them abruptly, when he was utterly vanquished by the hearty pressure of their hands and the unmistakable look of gratitude in their eyes.

"I was just saying to 'Lizy Jane," began Mr. Dimmidge breathlessly, "if I could only meet that young man o' the 'Clarion' what brought us together again" —

"You 'd be willin' to pay four times the amount we both paid him," interpolated the laughing Mrs. Dimmidge.

"But I did n't bring you together," burst out the dazed young man, "and I 'd like to know, in the name of Heaven, what brought you together now?"

"Don't you see, lad," said the imperturbable Mr. Dimmidge, "'Lizy Jane and myself had qua'led, and we just unpacked our fool nonsense in your paper and let the hull world know it! And we both felt kinder skeert and shamed like, and it looked such small hogwash, and of so

little account, for all the talk it made, that we kinder felt lonely as two separated fools that really ought to share their foolishness together."

"And that ain't all," said Mrs. Dimmidge, with a sly glance at her spouse, "for I found out from that 'Personal' you showed me that this particular old fool was actooally jealous! — *jealous!*"

"And then?" said the editor impatiently.

"And then I *knew* he loved me all the time."

THE SECRET OF SOBRIENTE'S WELL

EVEN to the eye of the most inexperienced traveler there was no doubt that Buena Vista was a "played-out" mining camp. There, seamed and scarred by hydraulic engines, was the old hillside, over whose denuded surface the grass had begun to spring again in fitful patches; there were the abandoned heaps of tailings already blackened by sun and rain, and worn into mounds like ruins of masonry; there were the waterless ditches, like giant graves, and the pools of slumgullion, now dried into shining, glazed cement. There were two or three wooden "stores," from which the windows and doors had been taken and conveyed to the newer settlement of Wynyard's Gulch. Four or five buildings that still were inhabited — the blacksmith's shop, the post-office, a pioneer's cabin, and the old hotel and stage-office — only accented the general desolation. The latter building had a remoteness of prosperity far beyond the others, having been a wayside Spanish-American *posada*, with adobe walls of two feet in thickness, that shamed the later shells of half-inch plank, which were slowly warping and cracking like dried pods in the oven-like heat.

The proprietor of this building, Colonel Swinger, had been looked upon by the community as a person quite as remote, old-fashioned, and inconsistent with present progress as the house itself. He was an old Virginian, who had emigrated from his decaying plantation on the James River only to find the slaves, which he had brought with him, freed men when they touched Californian soil; to be driven by Northern progress and "smartness" out of the larger cities into the mountains, to fix himself at last, with

the hopeless fatuity of his race, upon an already impoverished settlement; to sink his scant capital in hopeless shafts and ledges, and finally to take over the decaying hostelry of Buena Vista, with its desultory custom and few, lingering, impecunious guests. Here, too, his old Virginian ideas of hospitality were against his financial success; he could not dun nor turn from his door those unfortunate prospectors whom the ebbing fortunes of Buena Vista had left stranded by his side.

Colonel Swinger was sitting in a wicker-work rocking-chair on the veranda of his hotel, — sipping a mint julep which he held in his hand, while he gazed into the dusty distance. Nothing could have convinced him that he was not performing a serious part of his duty as hotel-keeper in this attitude, even though there were no travelers expected, and the road at this hour of the day was deserted. On a bench at his side Larry Hawkins stretched his lazy length, — one foot dropped on the veranda, and one arm occasionally groping under the bench for his own tumbler of refreshment. Apart from this community of occupation, there was apparently no interchange of sentiment between the pair. The silence had continued for some moments, when the colonel put down his glass and gazed earnestly into the distance.

"Seein' anything?" remarked the man on the bench, who had sleepily regarded him.

"No," said the colonel, "that is — it 's only Dick Ruggles crossin' the road."

"Thought you looked a little startled, ez if you 'd seen that ar wanderin' stranger."

"When I see that wandering stranger, sah," said the colonel decisively, "I won't be sittin' long in this yer chyar. I 'll let him know in about ten seconds that I don't harbor any vagrants prowlin' about like poor whites or free niggers on my propahty, sah!"

"All the same, I kinder wish ye did see him, for you'd be settled in *your* mind and I'd be easier in *mine*, ef you found out what he was doin' round yer, or ye had to admit that it was n't no *livin'* man."

"What do you mean?" said the colonel testily, facing around in his chair.

His companion also altered his attitude by dropping his other foot to the floor, sitting up, and leaning lazily forward with his hands clasped.

"Look yer, colonel. When you took this place, I felt I did n't have no call to tell ye all I know about it, nor to pizen yer mind by any darned fool yarns I mout hev heard. Ye know it was one o' them old Spanish *haciendas?*"

"I know," said the colonel loftily, "that it was held by a grant from Charles the Fifth of Spain, just as my propahty on the James River was given to my people by King James of England, sah!"

"That ez as may be," returned his companion, in lazy indifference; "though I reckon that Charles the Fifth of Spain and King James of England ain't got much to do with what I'm goin' to tell ye. Ye see, I was here long afore *your* time, or any of the boys that hev now cleared out; and at that time the *hacienda* belonged to a man named Juan Sobriente. He was that kind o' fool that he took no stock in mining. When the boys were whoopin' up the place and finding the color everywhere, and there was a hundred men working down there in the gulch, he was either ridin' round lookin' up the wild horses he owned, or sittin' with two or three lazy peons and Injins that was fed and looked arter by the priests. Gosh! now I think of it, it was mighty like *you* when you first kem here with your niggers. That's curious, too, ain't it?"

He had stopped, gazing with an odd, superstitious wonderment at the colonel, as if overcome by this not very remarkable coincidence. The colonel, overlooking or totally

oblivious to its somewhat uncomplimentary significance, simply said, "Go on. What about him?"

"Well, ez I was sayin', he warn't in it nohow, but kept on his reg'lar way when the boom was the biggest. Some of the boys allowed it was mighty oncivil for him to stand off like that, and others — when he refused a big pile for his *hacienda* and the garden, that ran right into the gold-bearing ledge — war for lynching him and driving him outer the settlement. But as he had a pretty darter or niece livin' with him, and, except for his partickler cussedness towards mining, was kinder peaceable and perlite, they thought better of it. Things went along like this, until one day the boys noticed — partickler ly the boys that had slipped up on their luck — that old man Sobriente was gettin' rich, — had stocked a ranch over on the Divide, and had given some gold candlesticks to the mission church. That would have been only human nature and business, ef he 'd had any during them flush times; but he had n't. This kinder puzzled them. They tackled the peons, — his niggers, — but it was all 'No sabe.' They tackled another man, — a kind of half-breed Kanaka, who, except the priest, was the only man who came to see him, and was supposed to be mighty sweet on the darter or niece, — but they did n't even get the color outer *him*. Then the first thing we knowed was that old Sobriente was found dead in the well!"

"In the well, sah!" said the colonel, starting up. "The well on my propahty?"

"No," said his companion. "The old well that was afterwards shut up. Yours was dug by the last tenant, Jack Raintree, who allowed that he did n't want to 'take any Sobriente in his reg'lar whiskey and water.' Well, the half-breed Kanaka cleared out after the old man's death, and so did that darter or niece; and the church, to whom old Sobriente had left this house, let it to Raintree for next to nothin'."

"I don't see what all that has got to do with that wandering tramp," said the colonel, who was by no means pleased with this history of his property.

"I'll tell ye. A few days after Raintree took it over, he was lookin' round the garden, which old Sobriente had always kept shut up agin strangers, and he finds a lot of dried-up 'slumgullion'[1] scattered all about the borders and beds, just as if the old man had been using it for fertilizing. Well, Raintree ain't no fool; he allowed the old man was n't one, either; and he knew that slumgullion was n't worth no more than mud for any good it would do the garden. So he put this yer together with Sobriente's good luck, and allowed to himself that the old coyote had been secretly gold-washin' all the while he seemed to be standin' off agin it! But where was the mine? Whar did he get the gold? That 's what got Raintree. He hunted all over the garden, prospected every part of it, — ye kin see the holes yet, — but he never even got the color!"

He paused, and then, as the colonel made an impatient gesture, he went on.

"Well, one night just afore you took the place, and when Raintree was gettin' just sick of it, he happened to be walkin' in the garden. He was puzzlin' his brain agin to know how old Sobriente made his pile, when all of a suddenst he saw suthin' a-movin' in the brush beside the house. He calls out, thinkin' it was one of the boys, but got no answer. Then he goes to the bushes, and a tall figger, all in black, starts out afore him. He could n't see any face, for its head was covered with a hood, but he saw that it held suthin' like a big cross clasped agin its breast. This made him think it was one o' them priests, until he looks agin and sees that it was n't no cross it was carryin', but a *pickaxe!* He makes a jump towards it, but it vanished! He traipsed over the hull garden, — went through ev'ry bush, — but it was clean

[1] That is, a viscid cement-like refuse of gold-washing.

gone. Then the hull thing flashed upon him with a cold shiver. The old man bein' found dead in the well! the goin' away of the half-breed and the girl! the findin' o' that slumgullion! The old man *had* made a strike in that garden, the half-breed had discovered his secret and murdered him, throwin' him down the well! It war no *livin'* man that he had seen, but the ghost of old Sobriente!"

The colonel emptied the remaining contents of his glass at a single gulp, and sat up. "It 's my opinion, sah, that Raintree had that night more than his usual allowance of corn-juice on board; and it 's only a wonder, sah, that he did n't see a few pink alligators and sky-blue snakes at the same time. But what 's this got to do with that wanderin' tramp?"

"They 're all the same thing, colonel, and in my opinion that there tramp ain't no more alive than that figger was."

"But *you* were the one that saw this tramp with your own eyes," retorted the colonel quickly, "and you never before allowed it was a spirit!"

"Exactly! I saw it whar a minit afore nothin' had been standin', and a minit after nothin' stood," said Larry Hawkins, with a certain serious emphasis; "but I warn't goin' to say it to *anybody*, and I warn't goin' to give you and the *hacienda* away. And ez nobody knew Raintree's story, I jest shut up my head. But you kin bet your life that the man I saw warn't no livin' man!"

"We 'll see, sah!" said the colonel, rising from his chair with his fingers in the armholes of his nankeen waistcoat, "ef he ever intrudes on my propahty again. But look yar! don't ye go sayin' anything of this to Polly, — you know what women are!"

A faint color came into Larry's face; an animation quite different from the lazy deliberation of his previous monologue shone in his eyes, as he said, with a certain rough respect he had not shown before to his companion, "That 's

why I 'm tellin' ye, so that ef *she* happened to see anything and got skeert, ye 'd know how to reason her out of it."

"'Sh ! " said the colonel, with a warning gesture.

A young girl had just appeared in the doorway, and now stood leaning against the central pillar that supported it, with one hand above her head, in a lazy attitude strongly suggestive of the colonel's Southern indolence, yet with a grace entirely her own. Indeed, it overcame the negligence of her creased and faded yellow cotton frock and unbuttoned collar, and suggested — at least to the eyes of *one* man — the curving and clinging of the jasmine vine against the outer column of the veranda. Larry Hawkins rose awkwardly to his feet.

"Now what are you two men mumblin' and confidin' to each other ? You look for all the world like two old women gossips," she said, with languid impertinence.

It was easy to see that a privileged and recognized autocrat spoke. No one had ever questioned Polly Swinger's right to interrupting, interfering, and saucy criticisms. Secure in the hopeless or chivalrous admiration of the men around her, she had repaid it with a frankness that scorned any coquetry ; with an indifference to the ordinary feminine effect or provocation in dress or bearing that was as natural as it was invincible. No one had ever known Polly to "fix up" for anybody, yet no one ever doubted the effect if she had. No one had ever rebuked her charming petulance, or wished to.

Larry gave a weak, vague laugh. Colonel Swinger as ineffectively assumed a mock parental severity. "When you see two gentlemen, miss, discussin' politics together, it ain't behavin' like a lady to interrupt. Better run away and tidy yourself before the stage comes."

The young lady replied to the last innuendo by taking two spirals of soft hair, like "corn-silk," from her oval cheek, wetting them with her lips, and tucking them behind

her ears. Her father's ungentlemanly suggestion being thus disposed of, she returned to her first charge.

"It ain't no politics; you ain't been swearing enough for *that!* Come, now! It's the mysterious stranger ye 've been talking about!"

Both men stared at her with unaffected concern.

"What do *you* know about any mysterious stranger?" demanded her father.

"Do you suppose you men kin keep a secret," scoffed Polly. "Why, Dick Ruggles told me how skeert ye all were over an entire stranger, and he advised me not to wander down the road after dark. I asked him if he thought I was a pickaninny to be frightened by bogies, and that if he had n't a better excuse for wantin' 'to see me home' from the Injin spring, he might slide."

Larry laughed again, albeit a little bitterly, for it seemed to him that the excuse was fully justified; but the colonel said promptly, "Dick 's a fool, and you might have told him there were worse things to be met on the road than bogies. Run away now, and see that the niggers are on hand when the stage comes."

Two hours later the stage came with a clatter of hoofs and a cloud of red dust, which precipitated itself and a dozen thirsty travelers upon the veranda before the hotel bar-room; it brought also the usual "express" newspapers and much talk to Colonel Swinger, who always received his guests in a lofty personal fashion at the door, as he might have done in his old Virginian home; but it brought likewise — marvelous to relate — an *actual guest*, who had two trunks and asked for a room! He was evidently a stranger to the ways of Buena Vista, and particularly to those of Colonel Swinger, and at first seemed inclined to resent the social attitude of his host, and his frank and free curiosity. When he, however, found that Colonel Swinger was even better satisfied to give an account of *his own*

affairs, his family, pedigree, and his present residence, he began to betray some interest. The colonel told him all the news, and would no doubt have even expatiated on his ghostly visitant, had he not prudently concluded that his guest might decline to remain in a haunted inn. The stranger had spoken of staying a week; he had some private mining speculations to watch at Wynyard's Gulch, — the next settlement, but he did not care to appear openly at the "Gulch Hotel." He was a man of thirty, with soft, pleasing features and a singular litheness of movement, which, combined with a nut-brown, gypsy complexion, at first suggested a foreigner. But his dialect, to the colonel's ears, was distinctly that of New England, and to this was added a puritanical and sanctimonious drawl. "He looked," said the colonel in after years, "like a blank light mulatter, but talked like a blank Yankee parson." For all that, he was acceptable to his host, who may have felt that his reminiscences of his plantation on the James River were palling on Buena Vista ears, and was glad of his new auditor. It was an advertisement, too, of the hotel, and a promise of its future fortunes. "Gentlemen having propahty interests at the Gulch, sah, prefer to stay at Buena Vista with another man of propahty, than to trust to those new-fangled papah-collared, ginger-bread booths for traders that they call 'hotels' there," he had remarked to some of "the boys." In his preoccupation with the new guest, he also became a little neglectful of his old chum and dependent, Larry Hawkins. Nor was this the only circumstance that filled the head of that shiftless loyal retainer of the colonel with bitterness and foreboding. Polly Swinger — the scornfully indifferent, the contemptuously inaccessible, the coldly capricious and petulant — was inclined to be polite to the stranger!

The fact was that Polly, after the fashion of her sex, took it into her pretty head, against all consistency and

logic, suddenly to make an exception to her general attitude towards mankind in favor of one individual. The reason-seeking masculine reader will rashly conclude that this individual was the *cause* as well as the object; but I am satisfied that every fair reader of these pages will instinctively know better. Miss Polly had simply selected the new guest, Mr. Starbuck, to show *others*, particularly Larry Hawkins, what she *could* do if she were inclined to be civil. For two days she "fixed up" her distracting hair at him so that its silken floss encircled her head like a nimbus; she tucked her oval chin into a white *fichu* instead of a buttonless collar; she appeared at dinner in a newly starched yellow frock! She talked to him with "company manners;" said she would "admire to go to San Francisco," and asked if he knew her old friends the Fauquier girls from "Faginia." The colonel was somewhat disturbed; he was glad that his daughter had become less negligent of her personal appearance; he could not but see, with the others, how it enhanced her graces; but he was, with the others, not entirely satisfied with her reasons. And he could not help observing — what was more or less patent to *all* — that Starbuck was far from being equally responsive to her attentions, and at times was indifferent and almost uncivil. Nobody seemed to be satisfied with Polly's transformation but herself.

But eventually she was obliged to assert herself. The third evening after Starbuck's arrival she was going over to the cabin of Aunt Chloe, who not only did the washing for Buena Vista, but assisted Polly in dressmaking. It was not far, and the night was moonlit. As she crossed the garden she saw Starbuck moving in the manzanita bushes beyond; a mischievous light came into her eyes; she had not *expected* to meet him, but she had seen him go out, and there were always *possibilities*. To her surprise, however, he merely lifted his hat as she passed, and

turned abruptly in another direction. This was more than the little heart-breaker of Buena Vista was accustomed to!

"Oh, Mr. Starbuck!" she called, in her laziest voice.

He turned almost impatiently.

"Since you 're so civil and pressing, I thought I 'd tell you I was just runnin' over to Aunt Chloe's," she said dryly.

"I should think it was hardly the proper thing for a young lady to do at this time of night," he said superciliously. "But you know best, — you know the people here."

Polly's cheeks and eyes flamed. "Yes, I reckon I do," she said crisply; "it 's only a *stranger* here would think of being rude. Good-night, Mr. Starbuck!"

She tripped away after this Parthian shot, yet feeling, even in her triumph, that the conceited fool seemed actually relieved at her departure! And for the first time she now thought that she had seen something in his face that she did not like! But her lazy independence reasserted itself soon, and half an hour later, when she had left Aunt Chloe's cabin, she had regained her self-esteem. Yet, to avoid meeting him again, she took a longer route home, across the dried ditch and over the bluff, scarred by hydraulics, and so fell, presently, upon the old garden at the point where it adjoined the abandoned diggings. She was quite sure she had escaped a meeting with Starbuck, and was gliding along under the shadow of the pear-trees, when she suddenly stopped. An indescribable terror overcame her as she stared at a spot in the garden, perfectly illuminated by the moonlight, not fifty yards from where she stood. For she saw on its surface a human head — a man's head! — seemingly on the level of the ground, staring in her direction. A hysterical laugh sprang from her lips, and she caught at the branches above her or she would have fallen! Yet in that moment the head had vanished! The moon-

light revealed the empty garden, — the ground she had gazed at, — but nothing more!

She had never been superstitious. As a child she had heard the negroes talk of "the hants," — that is, "the *haunts*" or spirits, — but had believed it a part of their ignorance, and unworthy a white child, — the daughter of their master! She had laughed with Dick Ruggles over the illusions of Larry, and had shared her father's contemptuous disbelief of the wandering visitant being anything but a living man; yet she would have screamed for assistance now, only for the greater fear of making her weakness known to Mr. Starbuck, and being dependent upon him for help. And with it came the sudden conviction that *he* had seen this awful vision, too. This would account for his impatience of her presence and his rudeness. She felt faint and giddy. Yet after the first shock had passed, her old independence and pride came to her relief. She would go to the spot and examine it. If it were some trick or illusion, she would show her superiority and have the laugh on Starbuck. She set her white teeth, clenched her little hands, and started out into the moonlight. But alas! for women's weakness. The next moment she uttered a scream and almost fell into the arms of Mr. Starbuck, who had stepped out of the shadows beside her.

"So you see you *have* been frightened," he said, with a strange, forced laugh; "but I warned you about going out alone!"

Even in her fright she could not help seeing that he, too, seemed pale and agitated, at which she recovered her tongue and her self-possession.

"Anybody would be frightened by being dogged about under the trees," she said pertly.

"But you called out before you saw me," he said bluntly, "as if something had frightened you. That was *why* I came towards you."

She knew it was the truth; but as she would not confess to her vision, she fibbed outrageously.

"Frightened," she said, with pale but lofty indignation. "What was there to frighten me? I'm not a baby, to think I see a bogie in the dark!" This was said in the faint hope that *he* had seen something too. If it had been Larry or her father who had met her, she would have confessed everything.

"You had better go in," he said curtly. "I will see you safe inside the house."

She demurred at this, but as she could not persist in her first bold intention of examining the locality of the vision without admitting its existence, she permitted him to walk with her to the house, and then at once fled to her own room. Larry and her father noticed their entrance together and their agitated manner, and were uneasy. Yet the colonel's paternal pride and Larry's lover's respect kept the two men from communicating their thoughts to each other.

"The confounded pup has been tryin' to be familiar, and Polly 's set him down," thought Larry, with glowing satisfaction.

"He 's been trying some of his sanctimonious Yankee abolition talk on Polly, and she shocked him!" thought the colonel exultingly.

But poor Polly had other things to think of in the silence of her room. Another woman would have unburdened herself to a confidante; but Polly was too loyal to her father to shatter his beliefs, and too high-spirited to take another and a lesser person into her confidence. She was certain that Aunt Chloe would be full of sympathetic belief and speculations, but she would not trust a nigger with what she could n't tell her own father. For Polly really and truly believed that she had seen a ghost, no doubt the ghost of the murdered Sobriente, according to Larry's story. *Why* he should appear with only his head above ground puzzled

her, although it suggested the Catholic idea of purgatory, and he was a Catholic! Perhaps he would have risen entirely but for that stupid Starbuck's presence; perhaps he had a message for *her* alone. The idea pleased Polly, albeit it was a "fearful joy" and attended with some cold shivering. Naturally, as a gentleman, he would appear to *her* — the daughter of a gentleman — the successor to his house — rather than to a Yankee stranger. What was she to do? For once her calm nerves were strangely thrilled; she could not think of undressing and going to bed, and two o'clock surprised her, still meditating, and occasionally peeping from her window upon the moonlit but vacant garden. If she saw him again, would she dare to go down alone? Suddenly she started to her feet with a beating heart! There was the unmistakable sound of a stealthy footstep in the passage, coming towards her room. Was it he? In spite of her high resolves she felt that if the door opened she should scream! She held her breath — the footsteps came nearer — were before her door — and *passed!*

Then it was that the blood rushed back to her cheek with a flush of indignation. Her room was at the end of the passage; there was nothing beyond but a private staircase, long disused, except by herself, as a short cut through the old *patio* to the garden. No one else knew of it, and no one else had the right of access to it! This insolent human intrusion — as she was satisfied it was now — overcame her fear, and she glided to the door. Opening it softly, she could hear the stealthy footsteps descending. She darted back, threw a shawl over her head and shoulders, and taking the small Derringer pistol which it had always been part of her ostentatious independence to place at her bed-head, she as stealthily followed the intruder. But the footsteps had died away before she reached the *patio*, and she saw only the small, deserted, grass-grown courtyard, half hidden in shadows, in whose centre stood the fateful and long sealed-

up well! A shudder came over her at again being brought into contact with the cause of her frightful vision, but as her eyes became accustomed to the darkness, she saw something more real and appalling! The well was no longer sealed! Fragments of bricks and boards lay around it! One end of a rope, coiled around it like a huge snake, descended its foul depths; and as she gazed with staring eyes, the head and shoulders of a man emerged slowly from it! But it was *not* the ghostly apparition of last evening, and her terror changed to scorn and indignation as she recognized the face of Starbuck!

Their eyes met; an oath broke from his lips. He made a movement to spring from the well, but as the girl started back, the pistol held in her hand was discharged aimlessly in the air, and the report echoed throughout the courtyard. With a curse Starbuck drew back, instantly disappeared in the well, and Polly fell fainting on the steps. When she came to, her father and Larry were at her side. They had been alarmed at the report, and had rushed quickly to the *patio*, but not in time to prevent the escape of Starbuck and his accomplice. By the time she had recovered her consciousness, they had learned the full extent of that extraordinary revelation which she had so innocently precipitated. Sobriente's well had really concealed a rich gold ledge, — actually tunneled and galleried by him secretly in the past, — and its only other outlet was an opening in the garden hidden by a stone which turned on a swivel. Its existence had been unknown to Sobriente's successor, but was known to the Kanaka who had worked with Sobriente, who fled with his daughter after the murder, but who no doubt was afraid to return and work the mine. He had imparted the secret to Starbuck, another half-breed, son of a Yankee missionary and Hawaiian wife, who had evidently conceived this plan of seeking Buena Vista with an accomplice, and secretly removing such gold as was still accessible. The

accomplice, afterwards identified by Larry as the wandering tramp, failed to discover the secret entrance *from* the garden, and Starbuck was consequently obliged to attempt it from the hotel — for which purpose he had introduced himself as a boarder — by opening the disused well secretly at night. These facts were obtained from papers found in the otherwise valueless trunks, weighted with stones for ballast, which Starbuck had brought to the hotel to take away his stolen treasure in, but which he was obliged to leave in his hurried flight. The attempt would have doubtless succeeded but for Polly's courageous and timely interference!

And now that they had told her *all*, they only wanted to know what had first excited *her* suspicions, and driven her to seek the well as the object of Starbuck's machinations? *They* had noticed her manner when she entered the house that night, and Starbuck's evident annoyance. Had she taxed him with her suspicions, and so discovered a clue?

It was a terrible temptation to Polly to pose as a more perfect heroine, and one may not blame her if she did not rise entirely superior to it. Her previous belief, that the head of the accomplice at the opening of the garden was that of a *ghost*, she now felt was certainly in the way, as was also her conduct to Starbuck, whom she believed to be equally frightened, and whom she never once suspected! So she said, with a certain lofty simplicity, that there were *some things* which she really did not care to talk about, and Larry and her father left her that night with the firm conviction that the rascal Starbuck had tried to tempt her to fly with him and his riches, and had been crushingly foiled. Polly never denied this, and once, in later days, when admiringly taxed with it by Larry, she admitted with dove-like simplicity that she *may* have been too foolishly polite to her father's guest for the sake of her father's hotel.

However, all this was of small account to the thrilling news of a new discovery and working of the "old gold ledge" at Buena Vista! As the three kept their secret from the world, the discovery was accepted in the neighborhood as the result of careful examination and prospecting on the part of Colonel Swinger and his partner, Larry Hawkins. And when the latter gentleman afterwards boldly proposed to Polly Swinger, she mischievously declared that she accepted him only that the secret might not go "out of the family."

WHEN THE WATERS WERE UP AT "JULES'"

WHEN the waters were up at "Jules'" there was little else up on that monotonous level. For the few inhabitants who calmly and methodically moved to higher ground, camping out in tents until the flood had subsided, left no distracting wreckage behind them. A dozen half-submerged log cabins dotted the tranquil surface of the waters, without ripple or disturbance, looking in the moonlight more like the ruins of centuries than of a few days. There was no current to sap their slight foundations or sweep them away; nothing stirred that silent lake but the occasional shot-like indentations of a passing raindrop, or, still more rarely, a raft, made of a single log, propelled by some citizen on a tour of inspection of his cabin roof-tree, where some of his goods were still stored. There was no sense of terror in this bland obliteration of the little settlement; the ruins of a single burnt-up cabin would have been more impressive than this stupid and even grotesquely placid effect of the rival destroying element. People took it naturally; the water went as it had come, — slowly, impassively, noiselessly; a few days of fervid Californian sunshine dried the cabins, and in a week or two the red dust lay again as thickly before their doors as the winter mud had lain. The waters of Rattlesnake Creek dropped below its banks, the stagecoach from Marysville no longer made a detour of the settlement. There was even a singular compensation to this amicable invasion: the inhabitants sometimes found gold in those breaches in the banks made by the overflow. To wait for the "old Rattlesnake sluicing" was a vernal hope of the trusting miner.

The history of "Jules'," however, was once destined to offer a singular interruption of this peaceful and methodical process. The winter of 1859–60 was an exceptional one. But little rain had fallen in the valleys, although the snow lay deep in the high Sierras. Passes were choked, ravines filled, and glaciers found on their slopes. And when the tardy rains came with the withheld southwesterly "trades," the regular phenomenon recurred; Jules' Flat silently, noiselessly, and peacefully went under water; the inhabitants moved to the higher ground, perhaps a little more expeditiously from an impatience born of the delay. The stagecoach from Marysville made its usual detour and stopped before the temporary hotel, express offices, and general store of "Jules'," under canvas, bark, and the limp leaves of a spreading alder. It deposited a single passenger, — Miles Hemmingway of San Francisco, but originally of Boston, — the young secretary of a mining company, dispatched to report upon the alleged auriferous value of "Jules'." Of this he had been by no means impressed as he looked down upon the submerged cabins from the box-seat of the coach and listened to the driver's lazy recital of the flood, and of the singularly patient acceptance of it by the inhabitants.

It was the old story of the southwestern miner's indolence and incompetency, — utterly distasteful to his northern habits of thought and education. Here was their old fatuous endurance of Nature's wild caprices, without that struggle against them which brought others strength and success; here was the old philosophy which accepted the prairie fire and cyclone, and survived them without advancement, yet without repining. Perhaps in different places and surroundings a submission so stoic might have impressed him; in gentlemen who tucked their dirty trousers in their muddy boots and lived only for the gold they dug, it did not seem to him heroic. Nor was he mollified as he stood

beside the rude refreshment bar — a few planks laid on trestles — and drank his coffee beneath the dripping canvas roof, with an odd recollection of his boyhood and an inclement Sunday-school picnic. Yet these men had been living in this shiftless fashion for three weeks! It exasperated him still more to think that he might have to wait there a few days longer for the water to subside sufficiently for him to make his examination and report. As he took a proffered seat on a candle-box, which tilted under him, and another survey of the feeble makeshifts around him, his irascibility found vent.

"Why, in the name of God, did n't you, after you had been flooded out *once*, build your cabins *permanently* on higher ground?"

Although the tone of his voice was more disturbing than his question, it pleased one of the loungers to affect to take it literally.

"Well, ez you 've put it that way, — 'in the name of God!'" — returned the man lazily, "it mout hev struck us that ez *He* was bossin' the job, so to speak, and handlin' things round here generally, we might leave it to Him. It was n't *our* flood to monkey with."

"And as He did n't coven-ant, so to speak, to look arter this higher ground 'speshally, and make an Ararat of it for us, ez far ez we could see, we did n't see any reason for *settlin'* yer," put in a second speaker, with equal laziness.

The secretary saw his mistake instantly, and had experience enough of Western humor not to prolong the disadvantage of his unfortunate adjuration. He colored slightly and said, with a smile, "You know what I mean; you could have protected yourselves better. A levee on the bank would have kept you clear of the highest watermark."

"Hev you ever heard *what* the highest watermark was?" said the first speaker, turning to another of the loungers without looking at the secretary.

"Never heard it, — did n't know there was a limit before," responded the man.

The first speaker turned back to the secretary. "Did you ever know what happened at 'Bulger's,' on the North Fork? They had one o' them levees."

"No. What happened?" asked the secretary impatiently.

"They was fixed suthin' like us," returned the first speaker. "*They* allowed they 'd build a levee above *their* highest watermark, and did. It worked like a charm at first; but the water hed to go somewhere, and it kinder collected at the first bend. Then it sorter raised itself on its elbows one day, and looked over the levee down upon whar some of the boys was washin' quite comf'ble. Then it paid no sorter attention to the limit o' that high watermark, but went six inches better! Not slow and quiet like ez it useter to, ez it does *here*, kinder fillin' up from below, but went over with a rush and a current, hevin' of course the whole height of the levee to fall on t' other side where the boys were sluicing." He paused, and amidst a profound silence added, "They say that 'Bulger's' was scattered promiscuous-like all along the fork for five miles. I only know that one of his mules and a section of sluicing was picked up at Red Flat, eight miles away!"

Mr. Hemmingway felt that there *was* an answer to this, but, being wise, also felt that it would be unavailing. He smiled politely and said nothing, at which the first speaker turned to him: —

"Thar ain't anything to see to-day, but to-morrow, ez things go, the water oughter be droppin'. Mebbe you 'd like to wash up now and clean yourself," he added, with a glance at Hemmingway's small portmanteau. "Ez we thought you 'd likely be crowded here, we 've rigged up a corner for you at Stanton's shanty with the women."

The young man's cheek flushed slightly at some possible

irony in this, and he protested with considerable stress that he was quite ready "to rough it" where he was.

"I reckon it 's already fixed," returned the man decisively, "so you 'd better come and I 'll show you the way."

"One moment," said Hemmingway, with a smile; "my credentials are addressed to the manager of the Boone Ditch Company at 'Jules'.' Perhaps I ought to see him first."

"All right; he 's Stanton."

"And" — hesitated the secretary, "*you*, who appear to understand the locality so well, — I trust I may have the pleasure" —

"Oh, I 'm Jules."

The secretary was a little startled and amused. So "Jules" was a person, and not a place!

"Then you 're a pioneer?" asked Hemmingway, a little less dictatorially, as they passed out under the dripping trees.

"I struck this creek in the fall of '49, comin' over Livermore's Pass with Stanton," returned Jules, with great brevity of speech and deliberate tardiness of delivery. "Sent for my wife and two children the next year; wife died same winter, change bein' too sudden for her, and contractin' chills and fever at Sweetwater. When I kem here first thar was n't six inches o' water in the creek; but there was a heap of it over there where you see them yallowish-green patches and strips o' brush and grass; all that war water then, and all that growth hez sprung up since."

Hemmingway looked around him. The "higher ground" where they stood was in reality only a mound-like elevation above the dead level of the flat, and the few trees were merely recent young willows and alders. The area of actual depression was much greater than he had imagined, and its resemblance to the bed of some prehistoric inland sea struck him forcibly. A previous larger inundation than Jules' brief experience had ever known had been by no means improb-

able. His cheek reddened at his previous hasty indictment of the settlers' ignorance and shiftlessness, and the thought that he had probably committed his employers to his own rash confidence and superiority of judgment. However, there was no evidence that this diluvial record was not of the remote past. He smiled again with greater security as he thought of the geological changes that had since tempered these cataclysms, and the amelioration brought by settlement and cultivation. Nevertheless, he would make a thorough examination to-morrow.

Stanton's cabin was the furthest of these temporary habitations, and was partly on the declivity which began to slope to the river's bank. It was, like the others, a rough shanty of unplaned boards, but, unlike the others, it had a base of logs laid lengthwise on the ground and parallel with each other, on which the flooring and structure were securely fastened. This gave it the appearance of a box slid on runners, or a Noah's Ark whose bulk had been reduced. Jules explained that the logs, laid in that manner, kept the shanty warmer and free from damp. In reply to Hemmingway's suggestion that it was a great waste of material, Jules simply replied that the logs were the "flotsam and jetsam" of the creek from the overflowed mills below.

Hemmingway again smiled. It was again the old story of Western waste and prodigality. Accompanied by Jules, however, he climbed up the huge, slippery logs which made a platform before the door, and entered.

The single room was unequally divided; the larger part containing three beds, by day rolled in a single pile in one corner to make room for a table and chairs. A few dresses hanging from nails on the wall showed that it was the women's room. The smaller compartment was again subdivided by a hanging blanket, behind which was a rude bunk or berth against the wall, and a table made of a packing-box, containing a tin basin and a can of water. This was his apartment.

"The women-folks are down the creek, bakin', to-day," said Jules explanatorily; "but I reckon that one of 'em will be up here in a jiffy to make supper, so you just take it easy till they come. I 've got to meander over to the claim afore *I* turn in, but you just lie by to-night and take a rest."

He turned away, leaving Hemmingway standing in the doorway still distraught and hesitating. Nor did the young man recognize the delicacy of Jules' leave-taking until he had unstrapped his portmanteau and found himself alone, free to make his toilet, unembarrassed by company. But even then he would have preferred the rough companionship of the miners in the common dormitory of the general store to this intrusion upon the half-civilization of the women, their pitiable little comforts and secret makeshifts. His disgust of his own indecision which brought him there naturally recoiled in the direction of his host and hostesses, and after a hurried ablution, a change of linen, and an attempt to remove the stains of travel from his clothes, he strode out impatiently into the open air again.

It was singularly mild even for the season. The southwest trades blew softly, and whispered to him of San Francisco and the distant Pacific, with its long, steady swell. He turned again to the overflowed Flat beneath him, and the sluggish yellow water that scarcely broke a ripple against the walls of the half-submerged cabins. And this was the water for whose going down they were waiting with an immobility as tranquil as the waters themselves! What marvelous incompetency, — or what infinite patience! He knew, of course, their expected compensation in this "ground sluicing" at Nature's own hand; the long rifts in the banks of the creek which so often showed "the color" in the sparkling scales of river gold disclosed by the action of the water; the heaps of reddish mud left after its subsidence around the walls of the cabins, — a deposit that often contained a treasure a dozen times more valuable

than the cabin itself! And then he heard behind him a laugh, a short and panting breath, and turning, beheld a young woman running towards him.

In his first astounded sight of her, in her limp nankeen sunbonnet, thrown back from her head by the impetus of her flight, he saw only too much hair, too much white teeth, too much eye-flash, and, above all, — as it appeared to him, — too much confidence in the power of these qualities. Even as she ran, it seemed to him that she was pulling down ostentatiously the rolled-up sleeves of her pink calico gown over her shapely arms. I am inclined to think that the young gentleman's temper was at fault, and his conclusion hasty; a calmer observer would have detected nothing of this in her frankly cheerful voice. Nevertheless, her evident pleasure in the meeting seemed to him only obtrusive coquetry.

"Lordy! I reckoned to git here afore you 'd get through fixin' up, and in time to do a little prinkin' myself, and here you 're out already." She laughed, glancing at his clean shirt and damp hair. "But all the same, we kin have a talk, and you kin tell me all the news afore the other wimmen get up here. It 's a coon's age since I was at Sacramento and saw anybody or anything." She stopped and, instinctively detecting some vague reticence in the man before her, said, still laughing, "You 're Mr. Hemmingway, ain't you?"

Hemmingway took off his hat quickly, with a slight start at his forgetfulness. "I beg your pardon; yes, certainly."

"Aunty Stanton thought it was 'Hummingbird,'" said the girl, with a laugh, "but I reckoned not. I 'm Jinney Jules, you know; folks call me 'J. J.' It would n't do for a Hummingbird and a Jay Jay to be in the same camp, would it? It would be just *too* funny!"

Hemmingway did not find the humor of this so singularly exhaustive, but he was already beginning to be

ashamed of his attitude towards her. "I'm very sorry to be giving you all this trouble by my intrusion, for I was quite willing to stay at the store yonder. Indeed," he added, with a burst of frankness quite as sincere as her own, "if you think your father will not be offended, I would gladly go there now."

If he still believed in her coquetry and vanity, he would have been undeceived and crushed by the equal and sincere frankness with which she met this ungallant speech.

"No! I reckon he would n't care, if you 'd be as comf'ble and fit for to-morrow. But ye *would n't*," she said reflectively. "The boys thar sit up late over euchre, and swear a heap, and Simpson, who 'd sleep alongside of ye, snores pow'ful, I 've heard. Aunty Stanton kin do her level at that, too, and they say" — with a laugh — "that *I* kin, too, but you 're away off in that corner, and it won't reach you. So, takin' it all, by the large, you 'd better stay whar ye are. We wimmen, that is, the most of us, will be off and away down to Rattlesnake Bar shoppin' afore sun up, so ye 'll sleep ez long ez ye want to, and find yer breakfast ready when ye wake. So I 'll jest set to and get ye some supper, and ye kin tell me all the doin's in Sacramento and 'Frisco while I 'm workin'."

In spite of her unconscious rebuff to his own vanity, Hemmingway felt a sense of relief and less constraint in his relations to this decidedly provincial hostess.

"Can I help you in any way?" he asked eagerly.

"Well, ye *might* bring me an armful o' wood from the pile under the alders, ef ye ain't afraid o' dirtyin' your coat," she said tentatively.

Mr. Hemmingway was not afraid; he declared himself delighted. He brought a generous armful of small cut willow boughs, and deposited them before a small stove, which seemed a temporary substitute for the usual large adobe chimney that generally occupied the entire gable of

a miner's cabin. An elbow and short length of stovepipe carried the smoke through the cabin side. But he also noticed that his fair companion had used the interval to put on a pair of white cuffs and a collar. However, she brushed the green moss from his sleeve with some toweling, and although this operation brought her so near to him that her breath — as soft and warm as the southwest trades — stirred his hair, it was evident that this contiguity was only frontier familiarity, as far removed from conscious coquetry as it was, perhaps, from educated delicacy.

"The boys gin'rally kem to take up enough wood for me to begin with," she said, "but I reckon they did n't know I was comin' up so soon."

Hemmingway's distrust returned a little at this obvious suggestion that he was only a substitute for their general gallantry, but he smiled and said somewhat bluntly, "I don't suppose you lack for admirers here."

The girl, however, took him literally. "Lordy, no! Me and Mamie Robinson are the only girls for fifteen miles along the creek. *Admirin'!* I call it jest *pesterin'* sometimes! I reckon I 'll hev to keep a dog!"

Hemmingway shivered. Yes, she was not only conscious, but spoilt already. He pictured to himself the uncouth gallantries of the settlement, the provincial badinage, the feeble rivalries of the young men whom he had seen at the general store. Undoubtedly this was what she was expecting in *him!*

"Well," she said, turning from the fire she had kindled, "while I 'm settin' the table, tell me what 's a-doin' in Sacramento! I reckon you 've got heaps of lady friends thar, — I 'm told there 's lots of fashions just from the States."

"I 'm afraid I don't know enough of them to interest you," he said dryly.

"Go on and talk," she replied. "Why, when Tom

Flynn kem back from Sacramento, and he warn't thar more nor a week, he jest slung yarns about his doin's thar to last the hull rainy season."

Half amused and half annoyed, Hemmingway seated himself on the little platform beside the open door, and began a conscientious description of the progress of Sacramento, its new buildings, hotels, and theatres, as it had struck him on his last visit. For a while he was somewhat entertained by the girl's vivacity and eager questioning, but presently it began to pall. He continued, however, with a grim sense of duty, and partly as a reason for watching her in her household duties. Certainly she was graceful! Her tall, lithe, but beautifully moulded figure, even in its characteristic southwestern indolence, fell into poses as picturesque as they were unconscious. She lifted the big molasses-can from its shelf on the rafters with the attitude of a Greek water-bearer. She upheaved the heavy flour-sack to the same secure shelf with the upraised palms of an Egyptian caryatid. Suddenly she interrupted Hemmingway's perfunctory talk with a hearty laugh. He started, looked up from his seat on the platform, and saw that she was standing over him and regarding him with a kind of mischievous pity.

"Look here," she said, "I reckon that 'll do! You kin pull up short! I kin see what 's the matter with you; you 're jest plumb tired, tuckered out, and want to turn in! So jest you sit thar quiet until I get supper ready and never mind me." In vain Hemmingway protested, with a rising color. The girl only shook her head. "Don't tell me! You ain't keerin' to talk, and you 're only playin' Sacramento statistics on me," she retorted, with unfeigned cheerfulness. "Anyhow, here 's the wimmen comin', and supper is ready."

There was a sound of weary, resigned ejaculations and pantings, and three gaunt women in lustreless alpaca gowns

appeared before the cabin. They seemed prematurely aged and worn with labor, anxiety, and ill-nourishment. Doubtless somewhere in these ruins a flower like Jay Jules had once flourished; doubtless somewhere in that graceful nymph herself the germ of this dreary maturity was hidden. Hemmingway welcomed them with a seriousness equal to their own. The supper was partaken with the kind of joyless formality which in the Southwest is supposed to indicate deep respect, even the cheerful Jay falling under the influence, and it was with a feeling of relief that at last the young man retired to his fenced-off corner for solitude and repose. He gathered, however, that before "sun up" the next morning the elder women were going to Rattlesnake Bar for the weekly shopping, leaving Jay as before to prepare his breakfast and then join them later. It was already a change in his sentiments to find himself looking forward to that *tête-à-tête* with the young girl, as a chance of redeeming his character in her eyes. He was beginning to feel he had been stupid, unready, and withal prejudiced. He undressed himself in his seclusion, broken only by the monotonous voices in the adjoining apartment. From time to time he heard fragments and scraps of their conversation, always in reference to affairs of the household and settlement, but never of himself, — not even the suggestion of a prudent lowering of their voices, — and fell asleep. He woke up twice in the night with a sensation of cold, so marked and distinct from his experience of the early evening that he was fain to pile his clothes over his blankets to keep warm. He fell asleep again, coming once more to consciousness with a sense of a slight jar, but relapsing again into slumber for he knew not how long. Then he was fully awakened by a voice calling him, and, opening his eyes, beheld the blanket partition put aside, and the face of Jay thrust forward. To his surprise it wore a look of excited astonishment dominated by irrepressible laughter.

"Get up quick as you kin," she said gaspingly; "this is about the killingest thing that ever happened!"

She disappeared, but he could still hear her laughing, and to his utter astonishment with her disappearance the floor seemed to change its level. A giddy feeling seized him; he put his feet to the floor: it was unmistakably wet and oozing. He hurriedly clothed himself, still accompanied by the strange feeling of oscillation and giddiness, and passed through the opening into the next room. Again his step produced the same effect upon the floor, and he actually stumbled against her shaking figure, as she wiped the tears of uncontrollable mirth from her eyes with her apron. The contact seemed to upset her remaining gravity. She dropped into a chair, and, pointing to the open door, gasped, "Look thar! Lordy! How 's that for high?" threw her apron over her head, and gave way to an uproarious fit of laughter.

Hemmingway turned to the open door. A lake was before him on the level of the cabin. He stepped forward on the platform; the water was right and left, all around him. The platform dipped slightly to his step. The cabin was afloat, — afloat upon its base of logs like a raft, the whole structure upheld by the floor on which the logs were securely fastened. The high ground had disappeared — the river — its banks — the green area beyond. They, and *they* alone, were afloat upon an inland sea.

He turned an astounded and serious face upon her mirth. "When did it happen?" he demanded. She checked her laugh, more from a sense of polite deference to his mood than any fear, and said quietly, "That gets me. Everything was all right two hours ago when the wimmen left. It was too early to get your breakfast and rouse ye out, and I fell asleep, I reckon, until I felt a kind o' slump and a jar." Hemmingway remembered his own half-conscious sensation. "Then I got up and saw we was adrift. I

did n't wake ye, for I thought it was only a sort of wave that would pass. It was n't until I saw we were movin' and the hull rising ground gettin' away, that I thought o' callin' ye."

He thought of the vanished general store, of her father, the workers on the bank, the helpless women on their way to the Bar, and turned almost savagely on her.

"But the others, — where are they?" he said indignantly. "Do you call that a laughing matter?"

She stopped at the sound of his voice as at a blow. Her face hardened into immobility, yet when she replied it was with the deliberate indolence of her father. "The wimmen are up on the hills by this time. The boys hev bin drowned out many times afore this and got clear off, on sluice boxes and timber, without squealing. Tom Flynn went down ten miles to Sayer's once on two bar'ls, and I never heard that *he* was cryin' when they picked him up."

A flush came to Hemmingway's cheek, but with it a gleam of intelligence. Of course the inundation was known to them *first*, and there was the wreckage to support them. They had clearly saved themselves. If they had abandoned the cabin, it was because they knew its security, perhaps had even seen it safely adrift.

"Has this ever happened to the cabin before?" he asked, as he thought of its peculiar base.

"No."

He looked at the water again. There was a decided current. The overflow was evidently no part of the original inundation. He put his hand in the water. It was icy cold. Yes, he understood it now. It was the sudden melting of snow in the Sierras which had brought this volume down the cañon. But was there more still to come?

"Have you anything like a long pole or stick in the cabin?"

"Nary," said the girl, opening her big eyes and shaking

her head with a simulation of despair, which was, however, flatly contradicted by her laughing mouth.

"Nor any cord or twine?" he continued.

She handed him a ball of coarse twine.

"May I take a couple of these hooks?" he asked, pointing to some rough iron hooks in the rafters, on which bacon and jerked beef were hanging.

She nodded. He dislodged the hooks, greased them with the bacon rind, and affixed them to the twine.

"Fishin'?" she asked demurely.

"Exactly," he replied gravely.

He threw the line in the water. It slackened at about six feet, straightened, and became taut at an angle, and then dragged. After one or two sharp jerks he pulled it up. A few leaves and grasses were caught in the hooks. He examined them attentively.

"We 're not in the creek," he said, "nor in the old overflow. There 's no mud or gravel on the hooks, and these grasses don't grow near water."

"Now, that 's mighty cute of you," she said admiringly, as she knelt beside him on the platform. "Let 's see what you 've caught. Look yer!" she added, suddenly lifting a limp stalk, "that 's 'old man,' and thar ain't a scrap of it grows nearer than Springer's Rise, — four miles from home."

"Are you sure?" he asked quickly.

"Sure as pop! I used to go huntin' it for smellidge."

"For what?" he said, with a bewildered smile.

"For this," — she thrust the leaves to his nose and then to her own pink nostrils; "for — for" — she hesitated, and then with a mischievous simulation of correctness added, "for the perfume."

He looked at her admiringly. For all her five feet ten inches, what a mere child she was, after all! What a fool he was to have taken a resentful attitude towards her! How charming and graceful she looked, kneeling there beside him!

"Tell me," he said suddenly, in a gentler voice, "what were you laughing at just now?"

Her brown eyes wavered for a moment, and then brimmed with merriment. She threw herself sideways, in a leaning posture, supporting herself on one arm, while with her other hand she slowly drew out her apron string, as she said, in a demure voice: —

"Well, I reckoned it was jest too killin' to think of you, who did n't want to talk to me, and would hev given your hull pile to hev skipped out o' this, jest stuck here alongside o' me, whether you would or no, for Lord knows how long!"

"But that was last night," he said, in a tone of raillery. "I was tired, and you said so yourself, you know. But I 'm ready to talk now. What shall I tell you?"

"Anything," said the girl, with a laugh.

"What I am thinking of?" he said, with frankly admiring eyes.

"Yes."

"Everything?"

"Yes, everything." She stopped, and leaning forward, suddenly caught the brim of his soft felt hat, and drawing it down smartly over his audacious eyes, said, "Everything *but that.*"

It was with some difficulty and some greater embarrassment that he succeeded in getting his eyes free again. When he did so, she had risen and entered the cabin. Disconcerted as he was, he was relieved to see that her expression of amusement was unchanged. Was her act a piece of rustic coquetry, or had she resented his advances? Nor did her next words settle the question.

"Ye kin do yer nice talk and philanderin' after we 've settled whar we are, whar we 're goin', and what 's goin' to happen. Jest now it 'pears to me that ez these yere logs are the only thing betwixt us and 'kingdom come,' ye 'd

better be hustlin' round with a few spikes to clinch 'em to the floor."

She handed him a hammer and a few spikes. He obediently set to work, with little confidence, however, in the security of the fastening. There was neither rope nor chain for lashing the logs together; a stronger current and a collision with some submerged stump or wreckage would loosen them and wreck the cabin. But he said nothing. It was the girl who broke the silence.

"What 's your front name?"

"Miles."

"*Miles*, — that 's a funny name. I reckon that 's why you war so *far off* and *distant* at first."

Mr. Hemmingway thought this very witty, and said so. "But," he added, "when I was a little nearer a moment ago, you stopped me."

"But you was moving faster than the shanty was. I reckon you don't take that gait with your lady friends at Sacramento! However, you kin talk now."

"But you forget I don't know 'where we are' nor 'what 's going to happen.'"

"But *I* do," she said quietly. "In a couple of hours we 'll be picked up, so you 'll be free again."

Something in the confidence of her manner made him go to the door again and look out. There was scarcely any current now, and the cabin seemed motionless. Even the wind, which might have acted upon it, was wanting. They were apparently in the same position as before, but his sounding-line showed that the water was slightly falling. He came back and imparted the fact with a certain confidence born of her previous praise of his knowledge. To his surprise she only laughed and said lazily, "We 'll be all right, and you 'll be free, in about two hours."

"I see no sign of it," he said, looking through the door again.

"That's because you're looking in the water and the sky and the mud for it," she said, with a laugh. "I reckon you've been trained to watch them things a heap better than to study the folks about here."

"I dare say you're right," said Hemmingway cheerfully, "but I don't clearly see what the folks about here have to do with our situation just now."

"You'll see," she said, with a smile of mischievous mystery. "All the same," she added, with a sudden and dangerous softness in her eyes, "I ain't sayin' that *you* ain't kinder right neither."

An hour ago he would have laughed at the thought that a mere look and sentence like this from the girl could have made his heart beat. "Then I may go on and talk?"

She smiled, but her eyes said, "Yes," plainly.

He turned to take a chair near her. Suddenly the cabin trembled, there was a sound of scraping, a bump, and then the whole structure tilted to one side and they were both thrown violently towards the corner, with a swift inrush of water. Hemmingway quickly caught the girl by the waist; she clung to him instinctively, yet still laughing, as with a desperate effort he succeeded in dragging her to the upper side of the slanting cabin, and momentarily restoring its equilibrium. They remained for an instant breathless. But in that instant he had drawn her face to his and kissed her.

She disengaged herself gently with neither excitement nor emotion, and, pointing to the open door, said, "Look there!"

Two of the logs which formed the foundation of their floor were quietly floating in the water before the cabin! The submerged obstacle or snag which had torn them from their fastening was still holding the cabin fast. Hemmingway saw the danger. He ran along the narrow ledge to the point of contact and unhesitatingly leaped into the icy

cold water. It reached his armpits before his feet struck the obstacle, — evidently a stump with a projecting branch. Bracing himself against it, he shoved off the cabin. But when he struck out to follow it, he found that the log nearest him was loose and his grasp might tear it away. At the same moment, however, a pink calico arm fluttered above his head, and a strong grasp seized his coat collar. The cabin half revolved as the girl dragged him into the open door.

"You bantam!" she said, with a laugh, "why did n't you let *me* do that? I 'm taller than you! But," she added, looking at his dripping clothes and dragging out a blanket from the corner, "I could n't dry myself as quick as you kin!" To her surprise, however, Hemmingway tossed the blanket aside, and pointing to the floor, which was already filmed with water, ran to the still warm stove, detached it from its pipe, and threw it overboard. The sack of flour, bacon, molasses, and sugar, and all the heavier articles followed it into the stream. Relieved of their weight the cabin base rose an inch or two higher. Then he sat down and said, "There! that may keep us afloat for that 'couple of hours' you speak of. So I suppose I may talk now!"

"Ye have n't no time," she said in a graver voice. "It won't be as long as a couple of hours now. Look over thar!"

He looked where she pointed across the gray expanse of water. At first he could see nothing. Presently he saw a mere dot on its face which at times changed to a single black line.

"It 's a log, like these," he said.

"It 's no log. It 's an Injun dugout — comin' for me."

"Your father?" he said joyfully.

She smiled pityingly. "It 's Tom Flynn. Father 's got suthin' else to look arter. Tom Flynn has n't."

"And who's Tom Flynn?" he asked, with an odd sensation.

"The man I'm engaged to," she said gravely, with a slight color.

The rose that blossomed on her cheek faded in his. There was a moment of silence. Then he said frankly, "I owe you some apology. Forgive my folly and impertinence a moment ago. How could I have known this?"

"You took no more than you deserved, or that Tom would have objected to," she said, with a little laugh. "You've been mighty kind and handy."

She held out her hand; their fingers closed together in a frank pressure. Then his mind went back to his work, which he had forgotten, — to his first impressions of the camp and of her. They both stood silent, watching the canoe, now quite visible, and the man that was paddling it, with an intensity that both felt was insincere.

"I'm afraid," he said, with a forced laugh, "that I was a little too hasty in disposing of your goods and possessions. We could have kept afloat a little longer."

"It's all the same," she said, with a slight laugh; "it's jest as well we did n't look too comf'ble — to *him*."

He did not reply; he did not dare to look at her. Yes! It was the same coquette he had seen last night. His first impressions were correct.

The canoe came on rapidly now, propelled by a powerful arm. In a few moments it was alongside, and its owner leaped on the platform. It was the gentleman with his trousers tucked in his boots, the second voice in the gloomy discussion in the general store last evening. He nodded simply to the girl, and shook Hemmingway's hand warmly.

Then he made a hurried apology for his delay: it was so difficult to find "the lay" of the drifted cabin. He had struck out first for the most dangerous spot, — the "old clearing," on the right bank, with its stumps and new

growths, — and it seemed he was right. And all the rest were safe, and "nobody was hurt."

"All the same, Tom," she said, when they were seated and paddling off again, "you don't know *how near you came to losing me.*" Then she raised her beautiful eyes and looked significantly, not at *him*, but at Hemmingway.

When the water was down at "Jules'" the next day, they found certain curious changes and some gold, and the secretary was able to make a favorable report. But he made none whatever of his impressions when the water was up at "Jules'," though he often wondered if they were strictly trustworthy.

THE YOUNGEST PROSPECTOR IN CALAVERAS

He was scarcely eight when it was believed that he could have reasonably laid claim to the above title. But he never did. He was a small boy, intensely freckled to the roots of his tawny hair, with even a suspicion of it in his almond-shaped but somewhat full eyes, which were the greenish hue of a ripe gooseberry. All this was very unlike his parents, from whom he diverged in resemblance in that fashion so often seen in the Southwest of America, as if the youth of the boundless West had struck a new note of independence and originality, overriding all conservative and established rules of heredity. Something of this was also shown in a singular and remarkable reticence and firmness of purpose, quite unlike his family or schoolfellows. His mother was the wife of a teamster, who had apparently once "dumped" his family, consisting of a boy and two girls, on the roadside at Burnt Spring, with the canvas roof of his wagon to cover them, while he proceeded to deliver other freight, not so exclusively his own, at other stations along the road, returning to them on distant and separate occasions with slight additions to their stock, habitation, and furniture. In this way the canvas roof was finally shingled and the hut enlarged, and, under the quickening of a smiling California sky and the forcing of a teeming California soil, the chance-sown seed took root and became known as Medliker's Ranch, or "Medliker's," with its bursting garden patch and its three sheds or "lean-to's."

The girls helped their mother in a childish, imitative way; the boy, John Bunyan, after a more desultory and original fashion — when he was not "going to" or ostensi-

bly "coming from" school, for he was seldom actually there. Something of this fear was in the mind of Mrs. Medliker one morning as she looked up from the kettle she was scrubbing, with premonition of "more worriting," to behold the Reverend Mr. Staples, the local minister, hale John Bunyan Medliker into the shanty with one hand. Letting Johnny go, he placed his back against the door and wiped his face with a red handkerchief. Johnny dropped into a chair, furtively glancing at the arm by which Mr. Staples had dragged him, and feeling it with the other hand to see if it was really longer.

"I 've been requested by the schoolmaster," said the Reverend Mr. Staples, putting his handkerchief back into his broad felt hat with a gasping smile, "to bring our young friend before you for a matter of counsel and discipline. I have done so, Sister Medliker, with some difficulty," — he looked down at John Bunyan, who again felt his arm and was satisfied that it *was* longer, — "but we must do our dooty, even with difficulty to ourselves, and, perhaps, to others. Our young friend, John Bunyan, stands on a giddy height — on slippery places, and," continued Mr. Staples, with a lofty disregard to consecutive metaphor, "his feet are taking fast hold of destruction." Here the child drew a breath of relief, possibly at the prospect of being on firm ground of any kind at last; but Sister Medliker, to whom the Staples style of exordium had only a Sabbath significance, turned to her offspring abruptly: —

"And what 's these yer doin's now, John? and me a slavin' to send ye to school?"

Thus appealed to, Johnny looked for a reply at his feet, at his arm, and at the kettle. Then he said: "*I* ain't done nothin', but *he*" — indicating Staples — "hez been nigh onter pullin' off my arm."

"It 's now almost a week ago," continued Mr. Staples, waving aside the interruption with a smile of painful Chris-

[illegible] — I won't be too sure — that the schoolmaster discovered that Johnny had in his possession two or three flakes of fine river gold — each of the value of half a dollar or perhaps sixty-two and one-half cents. On being questioned where he got them he refused to say, although subsequently he alleged that he had 'found' them. It being a single instance, he was given the benefit of the doubt, and nothing more was said about it. But a few days after he was found trying to pass off at Mr. Smith's store, two other flakes of a different size, and a small nugget of the value of four or five dollars. At this point I was called in; he repeated to me, I grieve to say, the same untruthfulness, and when I suggested to him the obvious fact that he had taken it from one of the miner's sluice boxes and committed the grievous sin of theft, he wickedly denied it — so that we are prevented from carrying out the Christian command of restoring it even *one* fold, instead of four or five fold as the Mosaic Law might have required. We were, alas! unable to ascertain anything from the miners themselves, though I grieve to say they one and all agreed that their 'take' that week was not at all what they had expected. I even went so far as to admit the possibility of his own statement, and besought him at least to show me where he had found it. He at first refused with great stubbornness of temper, but later consented to accompany me privately this afternoon to the spot." Mr. Staples paused, and sinking his voice gloomily, and with his eyes fixed upon Johnny, continued slowly: "When I state that, after several times trying to evade me on the way, he finally led me to the top of Bald Hill, where there is not a scrap of soil, and not the slightest indication, and still persisted that he found it *there*, you will understand, Sister Medliker, the incorrigibility of his conduct, and how he has added the sin of 'false witness' to his breaking the Eighth Commandment. But I leave him to your Christian discipline! Let us hope that if, through

his stiff-necked obduracy, he has haply escaped the vengeance of man's law, he will not escape the rod of the domestic tabernacle."

"Ye kin leave him to me," said Mrs. Medliker, in her anxiety to get rid of the parson assuming a confidence she was far from feeling.

"So be it, Sister Medliker," said Staples, drawing a long, satisfactory breath; "and let us trust that when you have rastled with his flesh and spirit, you will bring us joyful tidings to Wednesday's Mothers' Meeting."

He clapped his soft hat on his head, cast another glance at the wicked Johnny, opened the door with his hand behind him, and backed himself into the road.

"Now, Johnny," said Mrs. Medliker, setting her lips together as the door closed, "look me right in the face, and say where you stole that gold."

But Johnny evidently did not think that his mother's face at that moment offered any moral support, for he did not look at her, but, after gazing at the kettle, said slowly, "I did n't steal no gold."

"Then," said Mrs. Medliker triumphantly, "if ye did n't steal it, you 'd say right off *how* ye got it."

Children are often better logicians than their elders. To John Bunyan the stealing of gold and the mere refusal to say where he got it were two distinct and separate things; that the negation of the second proposition meant the affirmation of the first he could not accept. But then children are also imitative, and fearful of the older intellect. It struck Johnny that his mother might be right, and that to her it really meant the same thing. So after a moment's silence he replied more confidently, "I suppose I stoled it."

But he was utterly unprepared for the darkening change in his mother's face, and her furious accents. "You stole it? — you *stole* it, you limb! And you sit there and brazenly

and me. Where did you steal it from? Tell me quick, [illegible]

[illegible] upon the [illegible]

"[illegible] Did you take it from [illegible]?"

"No."

"From the Simmons Brothers?"

"No."

"From the Blazing Star Company?"

"No."

"From a store?"

"No."

"Then, in created goodness! — where did you get it?"

Johnny raised his brown-gooseberry eyes for a single instant to his mother's and said, "I found it."

Mrs. Medliker gasped again and stared hopelessly at the ceiling. Yet she was conscious of a certain relief. After all, it *was possible* that he had found it — liar as he undoubtedly was.

"Then why don't you say where, you awful child?"

"Don't want to!"

Johnny would have liked to add that he saw no reason why he should tell. Other people who found gold were not obliged to tell. There was Jim Brody, who had struck a lead and kept the locality secret. Nobody forced him to tell. Nobody called him a thief; nobody had dragged him about by the arm until he showed it. Why was it wrong that a little boy should find gold? It was n't agin the Commandments. Mr. Staples had never got up and said, "Thou shalt not find gold!" His mother had never made him pray not to find it! The schoolmaster had never read him awful stories of boys who found gold and never said anything about it, and so came to a horrid end. All this

crowded his small boy's mind, and, crowding, choked his small boy's utterance.

"You jest wait till your father comes home," said Mrs. Medliker, "and he 'll see whether you 'want to' or not. And now get yourself off to bed and stay there."

Johnny knew that his father — whose teams had increased to five wagons, and whose route extended forty miles further — was not due for a week, and that the catastrophe was yet remote. His present punishment he had expected. He went into the adjoining bedroom, which he occupied with his sister, and began to undress. He lingered for some time over one stocking, and finally cautiously removed from it a small piece of flake gold which he had kept concealed all day under his big toe, to the great discomfort of that member. But this was only a small, ordinary self-martyrdom of boyhood. He scratched a boyish hieroglyphic on the metal, and when his mother's back was turned scraped a small hole in the adobe wall, inserted the gold in it, and covered it up with a plaster made of the moistened débris. It was safe, — so was his secret, — for it need not, perhaps, be stated here that Johnny *had* told the truth and *had* honestly found the gold! But where? — yes, that was his own secret! And now, Johnny, with the instinct of all young animals, dismissed the whole subject from his mind, and, reclining comfortably upon his arm, fell into an interesting study of the habits of the red ant as exemplified in a crack of the adobe wall, and with the aid of a burnt match succeeded in diverting for the rest of the afternoon the attention of a whole laborious colony.

The next morning, however, brought trouble to him in the curiosity of his sisters, heightened by their belief that he could at any moment be taken off to prison, — which was their understanding of their mother's story. I grieve to say that to them this invested him with a certain romantic heroism, from the gratification of which the hero himself

was not exempt. Nevertheless, he successfully evaded their questioning, and on broader impersonal grounds. As girls, it was none of their business! He was n't a-going to tell them *his* secrets! And what did they know about gold, anyway? They could n't tell it from brass! The attitude of his mother was, however, still perplexing. She was no longer actively indignant, but treated him with a mysterious reserve that was the more appalling. The fact was that she no longer believed in his theft, — indeed, she had never seriously accepted it, — but his strange reticence and secretiveness piqued her curiosity, and even made her a little afraid of him. The capacity for keeping a secret she believed was manlike, and reminded her — for no reason in the world — of Jim Medliker, her husband, whom she feared. Well, she would let them fight it out between them. More than that, she was finally obliged to sink her reserve in employing him in the necessary "chores" for the house, and he was sent on an errand to the country store at the cross-roads. But he first extracted his gold-flake from the wall, and put it in his pocket.

On arriving at the store, it was plain even to his boyish perceptions that the minister had circulated his miserable story. Two or three of the customers spoke to each other in a whisper, and looked at him. More than that, when he began his homeward journey he saw that two of the loungers were evidently following him. Half in timidity and half in boyish mischief he once or twice strayed from the direct road, and snatched a fearful joy in observing their equal divergence. As he passed Mr. Staples's house he saw that reverend gentleman sneak out of his back gate, and, without seeing the two others, join in the inquisitorial procession. But the events of the past day had had their quickening effect upon Johnny's intellect. A brilliantly wicked thought struck him. As he was passing a perfectly bare spot on the road he managed, without being noticed,

to cast his glittering flake of gold on the sterile ground at the other side of the road, where the minister's path would lie. Then, at a point where the road turned, he concealed himself in the brush. The Reverend Mr. Staples hurried forward as he lost sight of the boy in the sweep of the road, but halted suddenly. Johnny's heart leaped. The minister looked around him, stooped, picked up the piece of gold, thrust it hurriedly in his waistcoat pocket, and continued his way. When he reached the turn of the road, before passing it, he availed himself of his solitude to pause and again examine the treasure, and again return it to his pocket. But, to Johnny's surprise, he here turned back, walked quickly to the spot where he had found it, and carefully examined the locality, kicking the loose soil and stones around with his feet until he had apparently satisfied himself that there was no more, and no gold-bearing indications in the soil. At this moment, however, the two other inquisitors came in sight, and Mr. Staples turned quickly and hurried on. Before he had passed the brush where Johnny was concealed, the two men overtook him and exchanged greetings. They both spoke of "Johnny" and his crime; of having followed him with a view of finding out where he went to procure his gold, and of his having again evaded them. Mr. Staples agreed with their purpose, but, to Johnny's intense astonishment, *said nothing about his own find!* When they had passed on, the boy slipped from his place of concealment and followed them at a distance until his own house came in view. Here the two men diverged, but the minister continued on towards the other "store" and post-office on the main road.

He would have told his mother what he had seen, and his surprise that the minister had not spoken of finding the gold to the other men, but he was checked, first by his mother's attitude towards him, which was clearly the same as the minister's, and, second, by the knowledge that she

would have condemned his dropping the gold in the minister's pail, — though he knew not why, — or asked his reason for it, which he was equally sure he could not formulate, though he also knew not why. But that evening, as he was returning from the spring with water, he heard the minister's voice in the kitchen. It had been a day of surprises and revelations to Johnny, but the climax seemed to be reached as he entered the room; and he now stood transfixed and open-mouthed as he heard Mr. Staples say: —

"It 's all very well, Sister Medliker, to comfort your heart with vain hopes and delusions. A mother's leanin's is the soul's deceivin's, — and ye 're leanin' on a broken reed. If the boy truly found that gold he 'd have come to ye and said: 'Behold, mother, I have found gold in the highways and byways; rejoice and be exceedin' glad!' and hev poured it inter yer lap. Yes," continued Mr. Staples aggressively to the boy, as he saw him stagger back with his pail in hand, "yes, sir, *that* would have been the course of a Christian child!"

For a moment Johnny felt the blood boiling in his ears, and a thousand words seemed crowding in his throat. "Then" — he gasped and choked. "Then" — he began again, and stopped with the suffocation of indignation.

But Mr. Staples saw in his agitation only an awakened conscience, and, nudging Mrs. Medliker, leaned eagerly forward for a reply. "Then," he repeated, with suave encouragement, "go on, Johnny! Speak it out!"

"Then," said Johnny, in a high, shrill falsetto that startled them, "then wot for did *you* pick up that piece o' gold in the road this arternoon, and say nothin' of it to the men who followed ye? Ye did; I seed yer! And ye did n't say nothin' of it to anybody; and ye ain't sayin' nothin' of it now ter maw! and ye 've got it in yer vest! And it 's mine, and I dropped it! Gimme it."

Astonishment, confusion, and rage swelled and empur

pled Staples's face. It was *his* turn to gasp for breath. Yet in the same moment he made an angry dash at the boy. But Mrs. Medliker interfered. This was an entirely new feature in the case. Great is the power of gold. A single glance at the minister's confusion had convinced her that Johnny's accusation was true, and it was Johnny's *money* — constructively *hers* — that the minister was concealing. His mere possession of that gold had more effect in straightening out her loose logic than any sense of hypocrisy.

"You leave the boy be, Brother Staples," said Mrs. Medliker sharply. "I reckon wot 's his is his'n, spite of whar he got it."

Mr. Staples saw his mistake, and smiled painfully as he fumbled in his waistcoat pocket. "I believe I *did* pick up something," he said, "that may or may not have been gold, but I have dropped it again or thrown it away; and really it is of little concern in our moral lesson. For we have only *his* word that it was really his! How do we *know* it?"

"Cos it has my marks on it," said Johnny quickly; "it has a criss-cross I scratched on it. I kin tell it good enuf."

Mr. Staples turned suddenly pale and rose. "Of course," he said to Mrs. Medliker with painful dignity, "if you set so much value upon a mere worldly trifle, I will endeavor to find it. It may be in my other pocket." He backed out of the door in his usual fashion, but instantly went over to the post-office, where, as he afterwards alleged, he had changed the ore for coin in a moment of inadvertence. But Johnny's hieroglyphics were found on it, and in some mysterious way the story got about. It had two effects that Johnny did not dream of. It had forced his mother into an attitude of complicity with him; it had raised up for him a single friend. Jake Stielitzer, quartz miner, had declared that Burnt Spring was "playing it low down" on Johnny! That if they really believed that the boy took

gold from their sluice boxes, it was their duty to watch their *claims* and not the boy. That it was only their excuse for "snooping" after him, and they only wanted to find his "strike," which was as much his as their claims were their own! All this with great proficiency of epithet, but also a still more recognized proficiency with the revolver, which made the former respected.

"That 's the real nigger in the fence, Johnny," said Jake, twirling his huge mustache, "and they only want to know where your lead is, — and don't yer tell 'em! Let 'em bile over with waitin' first, and that 'll put the fire out. Does yer pop know?"

"No," said Johnny.

"Nor yer mar?"

"No."

Jake whistled. "Then it 's only *you*, yourself?"

Johnny nodded violently, and his brown eyes glistened.

"It 's a heap of information to be packed away in a chap of your size, Johnny. Makes you feel kinder crowded inside, eh? *Must* keep it to yourself, eh?"

"Have to," said Johnny, with a gasp that was a little like a sigh.

It caused Jake to look at him attentively. "See here, Johnny," he said, "now ef ye wanted to tell somebody about it, — somebody as was a friend of yours, — *me*, f'r instance?"

Johnny slowly withdrew the freckled, warty little hand that had been resting confidingly in Jake's and gently sidled away from him. Jake burst into a loud laugh.

"All right, Johnny boy," he said, with a hearty slap upon the boy's back, "keep yer head shut ef yer wanter! Only ef anybody else comes bummin' round ye, like this, jest turn him over *to me*, and I 'll lift him outer his boots!"

Jake kept his word, and his distance thereafter. Indeed,

it was after this first and last conversation with him that the influence of his powerful protection was so strong that all active criticisms of Johnny ceased, and only a respectful surveillance of his movements lingered in the settlement. I do not know that this was altogether distasteful to the child; it would have been strange, indeed, if he had not felt at times exalted by this mysterious influence that he seemed to have acquired over his fellow creatures. If he were merely hunting blackberries in the brush, he was always sure, sooner or later, to find a ready hand offered to help and accompany him; if he trapped a squirrel or tracked down a wild bees' hoard, he generally found a smiling face watching him. Prospectors sometimes stopped him with: "Well, Johnny, as a chipper and fa'r-minded boy, now *whar* would *you* advise us to dig?" I grieve to say that Johnny was not above giving his advice, — and that it was invariably of not the smallest use to the recipient.

And so the days passed. Mr. Medliker's absence was protracted, and the hour of retribution and punishment still seemed far away. The blackberries ripened and dried upon the hillside, and the squirrels had gathered their hoards; the bees no longer came and went through the thicket, but Johnny was still in daily mysterious possession of his grains of gold! And then one day — after the fate of all heroic humanity — his secret was imperiled by the blandishments and machinations of the all-powerful sex.

Florry Fraser was a little playmate of Johnny's. Why, with his doubts of his elder sister's intelligence and integrity, he should have selected a child two years younger, and of singular simplicity, was, like his other secret, his own. What *she* saw in him to attract her was equally strange; possibly it may have been his brown-gooseberry eyes or his warts; but she was quite content to trot after him, like a young squaw, carrying his "bow-arrow," or his "trap," supremely satisfied to share his woodland knowledge or his

scanter confidences. For nobody who knew Johnny suspected that she was privy to his great secret. Howbeit, wherever his ragged straw hat, thatched with his tawny hair, was detected in the brush, the little nankeen sunbonnet of Florry was sure to be discerned not far behind. For two weeks they had not seen each other. A fell disease, nurtured in ignorance, dirt, and carelessness, was striking right and left through the valleys of the foothills, and Florry, whose sister had just recovered from an attack, had been sequestered with her. But one morning, as Johnny was bringing his wood from the stack behind the house, he saw, to his intense delight, a picket of the road fence slipped aside by a small red hand, and a moment after Florry squeezed herself through the narrow opening. Her round cheeks were slightly flushed, and there was a scrap of red flannel around her plump throat that heightened the whiteness of her skin.

"My!" said Johnny, with half-real, half-affected admiration, "how splendiferous!"

"Sore froat," said Florry in a whisper, trying to insert her two chubby fingers between the bandage and her chin. "I mussent go outer the garden patch! I mussent play in the woods, for I'll be seed! I mussent stay long, for they'll ketch me outer bed!"

"Outer bed?" repeated Johnny, with intense admiration, as he perceived for the first time that Florry was in a flannel nightgown, with bare legs and feet.

"Ess."

Whereupon these two delightful imps chuckled and wagged their heads with a sincere enjoyment that this mere world could not give! Johnny slipped off his shoes and stockings and hurriedly put them on the infant Florry, securing them from falling off with a thick cord. This added to their enjoyment.

"We can play cubby house in the stone heap," whispered Florry.

"Hol' on till I tote in this wood," said Johnny. "You hide till I come back."

Johnny swiftly delivered his load with an alacrity he had never shown before. Then they played "cubby house" — not fifty feet from the cabin, with a hushed but guilty satisfaction. But presently it palled. Their domain was too circumscribed for variety. "Robinson Crusoe up the tree" was impossible, as being visible from the house windows. Johnny was at his wits' end. Florry was fretful and fastidious. Then a great thought struck him and left him cold. "If I show you a show, you won't tell?" he said suddenly.

"No."

"Wish-yer-ma-die?"

"Ess."

"Got any penny?"

"No."

"Got any slate pencil?"

"No."

"Ain't got any pins nor nuthin'? You kin go in for a pin."

But Florry had none of childhood's fluctuating currency with her, having, so to speak, no pockets.

"Well," said Johnny, brightening up, "ye kin go in for luv."

The child clipped him with her small arms and smiled, and, Johnny leading the way, they crept on all fours through the thick ferns until they paused before a deep fissure in the soil half overgrown with bramble. In its depths they could hear the monotonous trickle of water. It was really the source of the spring that afterwards reappeared fifty yards nearer the road, and trickled into an unfailing pool known as the Burnt Spring, from the brown color of the surrounding bracken. It was the water supply of the ranch, and the reason for Mr. Medliker's original selection of that site.

Johnny lingered for an instant, looked carefully around, and then lowered himself into the fissure. A moment later he reached up his arms to Florry, lowered her also, and both disappeared from view. Yet from time to time their voices came faintly from below — with the gurgle of water — as of festive gnomes at play.

At the end of ten minutes they reappeared, a little muddy, a little bedraggled, but flushed and happy. There were two pink spots on Florry's cheeks, and she clasped something tightly in her little red fist.

"There," said Johnny, when they were seated in the straw again, "now mind you don't tell."

But here suddenly Florry's lips began to quiver, and she gave vent to a small howl of anguish.

"You ain't bit by a trant'ler nor nuthin'?" said Johnny anxiously. "Hush up!"

"N—o—o! But" —

"But what?" said Johnny.

"Mar said I *must* tell! Mar said I was to fin' out where you get the truly gold! Mar said I was to get you to take me," howled Florry, in an agony of remorse.

Johnny gasped. "You Injin!" he began.

"But I won't — Johnny!" said Florry, clutching his leg frantically. "I won't and I shan't! I ain't no Injin!"

Then, between her sobs, she told him how her mother and Mr. Staples had said that she was to ask Johnny the next time they met to take her where they found the "truly gold," and she was to remember where it was and to tell them. And they were going to give her a new dolly and a hunk of gingerbread. "But I won't — and I shan't!" she said passionately. She was quite pale again.

Johnny was convinced, but thoughtful. "Tell 'em," he said hoarsely, — "tell 'em a big whopper! They won't know no better. They 'll never guess where." And he briefly recounted the wild-goose chase he had given the minister.

"And get the dolly and the cake," said Florry, her eyes shining through her tears.

"In course," said Johnny. "They 'll get the dolly back, but you kin have eated the cake first." They looked at each other, and their eyes danced together over this heaven-sent inspiration. Then Johnny took off her shoes and stockings, rubbed her cold feet with his dirty handkerchief, and said: "Now you trot over to your mar!"

He helped her through the loose picket of the fence, and was turning away when her faint voice again called him.

"Johnny!"

He turned back; she was standing on the other side of the fence holding out her arms to him. He went to her with shining eyes, lifted her up, and from her hot but loving little lips took a fatal kiss.

For only an hour later Mrs. Fraser found Florry in her bed, tossing with a high fever and a light head. She was talking of "Johnny" and "gold," and had a flake of the metal in her tiny fist. When Mr. Staples was sent for, and with the mother and father hung anxiously above her bed, to their eager questioning they could only find out that Florry had been to a high mountain, ever so far away, and on the top of it there was gold lying around, and a shining figure was giving it away to the people.

"And who were the people, Florry dear," said Mr. Staples persuasively; "anybody ye know here?"

"They woz angels," said Florry, with a frightened glance over her shoulder.

I grieve to say that Mr. Staples did not look as pleased at the celestial vision as he might have, and poor Mrs. Fraser probably saw that in her child's face which drove other things from her mind. Yet Mr. Staples persisted: —

"And who led you to this beautiful mountain? Was it Johnny?"

"No."

"Who then?"

Florry opened her eyes on the speaker. "I fink it was Dod," she said, and closed them again.

But here Dr. Duchesne hurried in, and after a single glance at the child hustled Mr. Staples from the room. For there were grave complications that puzzled him. Florry seemed easier and quieter under his kindly voice and touch, but did not speak again, — and so, slowly sinking, passed away that night in a dreamless sleep. This was followed by a mad panic at Burnt Spring the next day, and Mrs. Medliker fled with her two girls to Sacramento, leaving Johnny, ostensibly strong and active, to keep house until his father's return. But Mr. Medliker's return was again delayed, and in the epidemic, which had now taken a fast hold of the settlement, Johnny's secret — and indeed the boy himself — was quite forgotten. Only on Mr. Medliker's arrival was it known that Johnny had been lying dangerously ill, alone, in the abandoned house. In his strange reticence and firmness of purpose he had kept his sufferings to himself, — as he had his other secret, — and they were revealed only in the wasted, hollow figure that feebly opened the door to his father.

On which intelligence Mr. Staples was, as usual, promptly on the spot with his story of Johnny's secret to the father, and his usual eager questioning to the fast-sinking boy.

"And now, Johnny," he said, leaning over the bed, "tell us *all*. There is One from whom no secrets are hid. Remember, too, that dear Florry, who is now with the angels, has already confessed."

Perhaps it was because Johnny, even at that moment, hated the man; perhaps it was because at that moment he loved and believed in Florry, or perhaps it was only that because at that moment he was nearer the greater Truth than his questioner, but he said, in a husky voice, "You lie!"

Staples drew back with a flushed face, but lips that

writhed in a pained and still persistent eagerness. "But, Johnny, at least tell us where — wh — wow — wow."

I am obliged to admit that these undignified accents came from Mr. Staples's own lips, and were due to the sudden pressure of Mr. Medliker's arm around his throat. The teamster was irascible and prompt through much mule-driving, and his arm was, from the same reason, strong and sinewy. Mr. Staples felt himself garroted and dragged from the room, and only came to under the stars outside, with the hoarse voice of Mr. Medliker in his ears: —

"You 're a minister of the gospel, I know, but ef ye say another word to my Johnny, I 'll knock the gospel stuffin' out of ye. Ye hear me! *I've driven mules afore!*"

He then strode back into the room. "Ye need n't answer, Johnny, he 's gone."

But so, too, had Johnny, for he never answered the question in this world, nor, please God, was he required to in the next. He lay still and dead. The community was scandalized the next day when Mr. Medliker sent for a minister from Sacramento to officiate at his child's funeral, in place of Mr. Staples, and then the subject was dropped.

. . . . . .

But the influence of Johnny's hidden treasure still remained as a superstition in the locality. Prospecting parties were continually made up to discover the unknown claim, but always from evidence and data altogether apocryphal. It was even alleged that a miner had one night seen the little figures of Johnny and Florry walking over the hilltop, hand in hand, but that they had vanished among the stars at the very moment he thought he had discovered their secret. And then it was forgotten; the prosperous Mr. Medliker, now the proprietor of a stagecoach route, moved away to Sacramento; Medliker's Ranch became a station for changing horses, and, as the new railway in time superseded even that, sank into a blacksmith's

shop on the outskirts of the new town of Burnt Spring. And then one day, six years after, news fell as a bolt from the blue!

It was thus recorded in the county paper: "A piece of rare good fortune, involving, it is said, the development of a lead of extraordinary value, has lately fallen to the lot of Mr. John Silsbee, the popular blacksmith, on the site of the old Medliker Ranch. In clearing out the failing water-course known as Burnt Spring, Mr. Silsbee came upon a rich ledge or pocket at the actual source of the spring, — a fissure in the ground a few rods from the road. The present yield has been estimated to be from eight to ten thousand dollars. But the event is considered as one of the most remarkable instances of the vagaries of 'prospecting' ever known, as this valuable 'pot-hole' existed undisturbed *for eight years* not *fifty yards* from the old cabin that was in former times the residence of J. Medliker, Esq., and the station of the Pioneer Stage Company, and was utterly unknown and unsuspected by the previous inhabitants! Verily truth is stranger than fiction!"

A TALE OF THREE TRUANTS

THE schoolmaster at Hemlock Hill was troubled that morning. Three of his boys were missing. This was not only a notable deficit in a roll-call of twenty, but the absentees were his three most original and distinctive scholars. He had received no preliminary warning or excuse. Nor could he attribute their absence to any common local detention or difficulty of travel. They lived widely apart and in different directions. Neither were they generally known as "chums," or comrades, who might have entered into an unhallowed combination to "play hookey."

He looked at the vacant places before him with a concern which his other scholars little shared, having, after their first lively curiosity, not unmixed with some envy of the derelicts, apparently forgotten them. He missed the cropped head and inquisitive glances of Jackson Tribbs on the third bench, the red hair and brown eyes of Providence Smith in the corner, and there was a blank space in the first bench where Julian Fleming, a lanky giant of seventeen, had sat. Still, it would not do to show his concern openly, and, as became a man who was at least three years the senior of the eldest, Julian Fleming, he reflected that they were "only boys," and that their friends were probably ignorant of the good he was doing them, and so dismissed the subject. Nevertheless, it struck him as wonderful how the little world beneath him got on without them. Hanky Rogers, bully, who had been kept in wholesome check by Julian Fleming, was lively and exuberant, and his conduct was quietly accepted by the whole school; Johnny Stebbins, Tribbs's bosom friend, consorted openly with Tribbs's

particular enemy; some of the girls were singularly gay and conceited. It was evident that some superior masculine oppression had been removed.

He was particularly struck by this last fact when, the next morning, no news coming of the absentees, he was impelled to question his flock somewhat precisely concerning them. There was the usual shy silence which follows a general inquiry from the teacher's desk; the children looked at one another, giggled nervously, and said nothing.

"Can you give me any idea as to what might have kept them away?" said the master.

Hanky Rogers looked quickly around, began, "Playin' hook—" in a loud voice, but stopped suddenly without finishing the word, and became inaudible. The master saw fit to ignore him.

"Bee-huntin'," said Annie Roker vivaciously.

"Who is?" asked the master.

"Provy Smith, of course. Allers bee-huntin'. Gets lots o' honey. Got two full combs in his desk last week. He 's awful on bees and honey. Ain't he, Jinny?" This in a high voice to her sister.

The younger Miss Roker, thus appealed to, was heard to murmur that of all the sneakin' bee-hunters she had ever seed, Provy Smith was the worst. "And squirrels — for nuts," she added.

The master became attentive, — a clue seemed probable here. "Would Tribbs and Fleming be likely to go with him?" he asked.

A significant silence followed. The master felt that the children recognized a doubt of this, knowing the boys were not "chums;" possibly they also recognized something incriminating to them, and with characteristic freemasonry looked at one another and were dumb.

He asked no further questions, but, when school was dismissed, mounted his horse and started for the dwelling

of the nearest culprit, Jackson Tribbs, four miles distant. He had often admired the endurance of the boy, who had accomplished the distance, including the usual meanderings of a country youth, twice a day, on foot, in all weathers, with no diminution of spirits or energy. He was still more surprised when he found it a mountain road, and that the house lay well up on the ascent of the pass. Autumn was visible only in a few flaming sumacs set among the climbing pines, and here, in a little clearing to the right, appeared the dwelling he was seeking.

"Tribbses," or "Tribbs's Run," was devoted to the work of cutting down the pines midway on a long regularly sloping mountain-side, which allowed the trunks, after they were trimmed and cut into suitable lengths, to be slid down through rude runs, or artificial channels, into the valley below, where they were collected by teams and conveyed to the nearest mills. The business was simple in the extreme, and was carried on by Tribbs senior, two men with saws and axes, and the natural laws of gravitation. The house was a long log cabin; several sheds roofed with bark or canvas seemed consistent with the still lingering summer and the heated odors of the pines, but were strangely incongruous to those white patches on the table-land and the white tongue stretching from the ridge to the valley. But the master was familiar with those Sierran contrasts, and as he had never ascended the trail before, it might be only the usual prospect of the dwellers there. At this moment Mr. Tribbs appeared from the cabin, with his axe on his shoulder. Nodding carelessly to the master, he was moving away, when the latter stopped him.

"Is Jackson here?" he asked.

"No," said the father half impatiently, still moving on. "Hain't seen him since yesterday."

"Nor has he been at school," said the master, "either yesterday or to-day."

Mr. Tribbs looked puzzled and grieved. "Now I reckoned you had kep' him in for some devilment of his'n, or lessons."

"Not *all night!*" said the master, somewhat indignant at this presumption of his arbitrary functions.

"Humph!" said Mr. Tribbs. "Mariar!" Mrs. Tribbs made her appearance in the doorway. "The schoolmaster allows that Jackson ain't bin to school at all." Then, turning to the master, he added, "Thar! you settle it between ye," and quietly walked away.

Mrs. Tribbs looked by no means satisfied with or interested in the proposed *tête-à-tête*. "Hev ye looked in the bresh" (i. e., brush or underwood) "for him?" she said querulously.

"No," said the master, "I came here first. There are two other boys missing, — Providence Smith and Julian Fleming. Did either of them" —

But Mrs. Tribbs had interrupted him with a gesture of impatient relief. "Oh, that's all, is it? Playin' hookey together, in course. 'Scuse me, I must go back to my bakin'." She turned away, but stopped suddenly, touched, as the master fondly believed, by some tardy maternal solicitude. But she only said: "When he *does* come back, you just give him a whalin', will ye?" and vanished into her kitchen.

The master rode away, half ashamed of his foolish concern for the derelicts. But he determined to try Smith's father, who owned a small rancho lower down on a spur of the same ridge. But the spur was really nearer Hemlock Hill, and could have been reached more directly by a road from there. He, however, kept along the ridge, and after half an hour's ride was convinced that Jackson Tribbs could have communicated with Provy Smith without coming nearer Hemlock Hill, and this revived his former belief that they were together. He found the paternal

Smith engaged in hoeing potatoes in a stony field. The look of languid curiosity with which he had regarded the approach of the master changed to one of equally languid aggression as he learned the object of his visit.

"Wot are ye comin' to *me* for?. I ain't runnin' your school," he said slowly and aggressively. "I started Providence all right for it mornin' afore last, since when I never set eyes on him. That lets *me* out. My business, young feller, is lookin' arter the ranch. Yours, I reckon, is lookin' arter your scholars."

"I thought it my business to tell you your son was absent from school," said the master coldly, turning away. "If you are satisfied, I have nothing more to say." Nevertheless, for the moment he was so startled by this remarkable theory of his own responsibility in the case that he quite accepted the father's callousness, — or rather it seemed to him that his unfortunate charges more than ever needed his protection. There was still the chance of his hearing some news from Julian Fleming's father; he lived at some distance, in the valley on the opposite side of Hemlock Hill; and thither the master made his way. Luckily he had not gone far before he met Mr. Fleming, who was a teamster, en route. Like the fathers of the other truants, he was also engaged in his vocation. But, unlike the others, Fleming senior was jovial and talkative. He pulled up his long team promptly, received the master's news with amused interest, and an invitation to spirituous refreshment from a demijohn in his wagon.

"Me and the ole woman kind o' spekilated that Jule might hev been over with Aunt Marthy; but don't you worry, Mr. Schoolmaster. They 're limbs, every one o' them, but they 'll fetch up somewhere, all square! Just you put two fingers o' that corn juice inside ye, and let 'em slide. Ye did n't hear what the 'lekshun news was when ye was at Smith's, did ye?"

The master had not inquired. He confessed he had been worried about the boys. He had even thought that Julian might have met with an accident.

Mr. Fleming wiped his mouth, with a humorous affectation of concern. "Met with an *accident?* Yes, I reckon not *one* accident, but *two* of 'em. These yer accidents Jule 's met with had two legs, and were mighty lively accidents, you bet, and took him off with 'em; or mebbe they had four legs, and he 's huntin' 'em yet. Accidents! Now I never thought o' that! Well, when you come across him and *them accidents*, you just whale 'em, all three! And ye won't take another drink? Well, so long, then! Gee up!" He rolled away, with a laugh, in the heavy dust kicked up by his plunging mules, and the master made his way back to the schoolhouse. His quest for that day was ended.

But the next morning he was both astounded and relieved, at the assembling of school, to find the three truants back in their places. His urgent questioning of them brought only the one and same response from each: "Got lost on the ridge." He further gathered that they had slept out for two nights, and were together all the time, but nothing further, and no details were given. The master was puzzled. They evidently expected punishment; that was no doubt also the wish of their parents; but if their story was true, it was a serious question if he ought to inflict it. There was no means of testing their statement; there was equally none by which he could controvert it. It was evident that the whole school accepted it without doubt; whether they were in possession of details gained from the truants themselves which they had withheld from him, or whether from some larger complicity with the culprits, he could not say. He told them gravely that he should withhold equally their punishment and their pardon until he could satisfy himself of their veracity, and

that there had been no premeditation in their act. They seemed relieved, but here, again, he could not tell whether it sprang from confidence in their own integrity, or merely from youthful hopefulness that delayed retribution never arrived!

It was a month before their secret was fully disclosed. It was slowly evolved from corroborating circumstances, but always with a shy reluctance from the boys themselves, and a surprise that any one should think it of importance. It was gathered partly from details picked up at recess or on the playground, from the voluntary testimony of teamsters and packers, from a record in the county newspaper, but always shaping itself into a consecutive and harmonious narrative.

It was a story so replete with marvelous escape and adventure that the master hesitated to accept it in its entirety until after it had long become a familiar history, and was even forgotten by the actors themselves. And even now he transcribes it more from the circumstances that surrounded it than from a hope that the story will be believed.

WHAT HAPPENED

Master Provy Smith had started out that eventful morning with the intention of fighting Master Jackson Tribbs for the "Kingship" of Table Ridge, — a trifling territory of ten leagues square, — Tribbs having infringed on his boundaries and claimed absolute sovereignty over the whole mountain range. Julian Fleming was present as referee and bottle-holder. The battle-ground selected was the highest part of the ridge. The hour was six o'clock, which would allow them time to reach school before its opening, with all traces of their conflict removed. The air was crisp and cold, — a trifle colder than usual, — and there was a singular thickening of the sun's rays on the ridge, which

made the distant peaks indistinct and ghostlike. However, the two combatants stripped "to the buff," and Fleming patronizingly took position at the "corner," leaning upon a rifle, which, by reason of his superior years, and the wilderness he was obliged to traverse in going to school, his father had lent him to carry. It was that day a providential weapon.

Suddenly Fleming uttered the word "Sho!" The two combatants paused in their first "squaring off" to see, to their surprise, that their referee had faced round, with his gun in his hand, and was staring in another direction.

"B'ar!" shouted the three voices together. A huge bear, followed by her cubs, was seen stumbling awkwardly away to the right, making for the timber below. In an instant the boys had hurried into their jackets again, and the glory of fight was forgotten in the fever of the chase. Why should they pound each other when there was something to really *kill?* They started in instant pursuit, Julian leading.

But the wind was now keen and bitter in their faces, and that peculiar thickening of the air which they had noticed had become first a dark blue and then a whitening pall, in which the bear was lost. They still kept on. Suddenly Julian felt himself struck between the eyes by what seemed a snowball, and his companions were as quickly spattered by gouts of monstrous clinging snowflakes. Others as quickly followed, — it was not snowing, it was snowballing. They at first laughed, affecting to retaliate with these whirling, flying masses shaken like clinging feathers from a pillow; but in a few seconds they were covered from head to foot by snow, their limbs impeded or pinioned against them by its weight, their breath gone. They stopped blindly, breathlessly. Then, with a common instinct, they turned back. But the next moment they heard Julian cry, "Look out!" Coming towards them out of the storm was the bear, who

had evidently turned back by the same instinct. An ungovernable impulse seized the younger boys, and they fled. But Julian stopped with leveled rifle. The bear stopped too, with sullen, staring eyes. But the eyes that glanced along the rifle were young, true, and steady. Julian fired. The hot smoke was swept back by the gale into his face, but the bear turned and disappeared in the storm again. Julian ran on to where his companions had halted at the report, a little ashamed of their cowardice. "Keep on that way!" he shouted hoarsely. "No use tryin' to go where the b'ar could n't. Keep on!"

"Keep on — whar? There ain't no trail — no nuthin'!" said Jackson querulously, to hold down a rising fear. It was true. The trail had long since disappeared; even their footprints of a moment before were filled up by the piling snow; they were isolated in this stony upland, high in air, without a rock or tree to guide them across its vast white level. They were bitterly cold and benumbed. The stimulus of the storm and chase had passed, but Julian kept driving them before him, himself driven along by the furious blast, yet trying to keep some vague course along the waste. So an hour passed. Then the wind seemed to have changed, or else they had traveled in a circle, — they knew not which, but the snow was in their faces now. But, worst of all, the snow had changed too; it no longer fell in huge blue flakes, but in millions of stinging gray granules. Julian's face grew hard and his eyes bright. He knew it was no longer a snow-squall, but a lasting storm. He stopped; the boys tumbled against him. He looked at them with a strange smile.

"Hev you two made up?" he said.

"No—o!"

"Make up, then."

"What?"

"Shake hands."

They clasped each other's red, benumbed fingers and laughed, albeit a little frightened at Julian. "Go on!" he said curtly.

They went on dazedly, stupidly, for another hour.

Suddenly Provy Smith's keen eyes sparkled. He pointed to a singular irregular mound of snow before them, plainly seen above the dreary level. Julian ran to it with a cry, and began wildly digging. "I knew I hit her," he cried, as he brushed the snow from a huge and hairy leg. It was the bear, — dead, but not yet cold. She had succumbed with her huge back to the blast, the snow piling a bulwark behind her, where it had slowly roofed her in. The half-frozen lads threw themselves fearlessly against the furry coat and crept between the legs, nestling themselves beneath the still warm body with screams of joy. The snow they had thrown back increased the bulwark, and, drifting over it, in a few moments inclosed them in a thin shell of snow. Thoroughly exhausted, after a few grunts of satisfaction, a deep sleep fell upon them, from which they were awakened only by the pangs of hunger. Alas! their dinners — the school dinners — had been left on the inglorious battlefield. Nevertheless, they talked of eating the bear if it came to the worst. They would have tried it even then, but they were far above the belt of timber; they had matches — what boy has not? — but no *wood*. Still, they were reassured, and even delighted, with this prospect, and so fell asleep again, stewing with the dead bear in the half-impervious snow, and woke up in the morning ravenous, yet to see the sun shining in their faces through the melted snow, and for Jackson Tribbs to quickly discover, four miles away as the crow flies, the cabin of his father among the flaming sumacs.

They started up in the glare of the sun, which at first almost blinded them. They then discovered that they were in a depression of the table-land that sloped before them to

a deep gully in the mountain-side, which again dropped into the cañon below. The trail they had lost, they now remembered, must be near this edge. But it was still hidden, and in seeking it there was danger of some fatal misstep in the treacherous snow. Nevertheless, they sallied out bravely, although they would fain have stopped to skin the bear, but Julian's mandate was peremptory. They spread themselves along the ridge, at times scraping the loose snow away in their search for the lost trail.

Suddenly they all slipped and fell, but rose again quickly, laughing. Then they slipped and fell again, but this time with the startling consciousness that it was not *they* who had slipped, but *the snow!* As they regained their feet they could plainly see now that a large crack on the white field, some twenty feet in width, extended between them and the carcass of the bear, showing the glistening rock below. Again they were thrown down with a sharp shock. Jackson Tribbs, who had been showing a strange excitement, suddenly gave a cry of warning. "Lie flat, fellers! but keep a-crawlin' and jumpin'. We 're goin' down a slide!" And the next moment they were sliding and tossing, apparently with the whole snow-field, down towards the gullied precipice.

What happened after this, and how long it lasted, they never knew. For, hurried along with increasing momentum, but always mechanically clutching at the snow, and bounding from it as they swept on, they sometimes lost breath, and even consciousness. At times they were half suffocated in rolling masses of drift, and again free and skimming over its arrested surface, but always falling, as it seemed to them, almost perpendicularly. In one of these shocks they seemed to be going through a thicket of underbrush; but Provy Smith knew that they were the tops of pine-trees. At last there was one shock longer and lasting, followed by a deepening thunder below them. The ava-

lanche had struck a ledge in the mountain side, and precipitated its lower part into the valley.

Then everything was still, until Provy heard Julian's voice calling. He answered, but there was no response from Tribbs. Had he gone over into the valley? They set up a despairing shout! A voice — a smothered one — that might be his, came apparently from the snow beneath them. They shouted again; the voice, vague and hollow, responded, but it was now surely his.

"Where are you?" screamed Provy.

"Down the chimbley."

There was a black square of adobe sticking out of the snow near them. They ran to it. There was a hole. They peered down, but could see nothing at first but a faint glimmer.

"Come down, fellers! It ain't far!" said Tribbs's voice.

"Wot yer got there?" asked Julian cautiously.

"Suthin' to eat."

That was enough. In another instant Julian and Provy went down the chimney. What was a matter of fifteen feet after a thousand? Tribbs had already lit a candle, by which they could see that they were in the cabin of some tunnel-man at work on the ridge. He had probably been in the tunnel when the avalanche fell, and escaped, though his cabin was buried. The three discoverers helped themselves to his larder. They laughed and ate as at a picnic, played cards, pretended it was a robber's cave, and finally, wrapping themselves in the miner's blankets, slept soundly, knowing where they were, and confident also that they could find the trail early the next morning. They did so, and without going to their homes came directly to school — having been absent about fifty hours. They were in high spirits, except for the thought of approaching punishment, never dreaming to evade it by anything miraculous in their adventures.

Such was briefly their story. Its truth was corroborated by the discovery of the bear's carcass, by the testimony of the tunnel-man, who found his larder mysteriously ransacked in his buried cabin, and, above all, by the long white tongue that for many months hung from the ledge into the valley. Nobody thought the lanky Julian a hero, — least of all himself. Nobody suspected that Jackson Tribbs's treatment of a "slide" had been gathered from experiments in his father's "runs,"—and he was glad they did not. The master's pardon obtained, the three truants cared little for the opinion of Hemlock Hill. They knew *themselves* — that was enough.

THE MAN AND THE MOUNTAIN

He was such a large, strong man that, when
set foot in the little parallelogram I called my ga
seemed to shrink to half its size and become prepo
But I noticed at the same time that he was holdin
palm of his huge hand the roots of a violet, with
finite tenderness and delicacy that I would have
him as my gardener on the spot. But this could
as he was already the proud proprietor of a market
and nursery on the outskirts of the suburban Cal
town where I lived. He would, however, come
days in the week, stock and look after my garden,
part to my urban intellect such horticultural hints
necessary. His name was "Rütli," which I presu
be German, but which my neighbors rendered as
leigh," possibly from some vague connection with h
pation. His own knowledge of English was oral a
netic. I have a delightful recollection of a bill o
which I was charged for "fioletz," with the vague
of "maine cains." Subsequent explanation proved
"many kinds."

Nevertheless, my little garden bourgeoned and bl
under his large, protecting hand. I became accust
walk around his feet respectfully when they bloc
tiny paths, and to expect the total eclipse of that
bed on which he worked, by his huge bulk. For
est and most reluctant rootlet seemed to respond
caressing paternal touch; it was a pretty sight to
huge fingers tying up some slender stalk to its sti
the smallest thread, and he had a reverent way o

a bulb or seed in the ground, and then gently shaping and smoothing a small mound over it, which made the little inscription on the stick above more like an affecting epitaph than ever. Much of this gentleness may have been that apology for his great strength, common with large men; but his face was distinctly amiable, and his very light blue eyes were at times wistful and doglike in their kindliness. I was soon to learn, however, that placability was not entirely his nature.

The garden was part of a fifty *vara* lot of land, on which I was simultaneously erecting a house. But the garden was finished before the house was, through certain circumstances very characteristic of that epoch and civilization. I had purchased the Spanish title, the only *legal* one, to the land, which, however, had been in *possession* of a "squatter." But he had been unable to hold that possession against a "jumper," — another kind of squatter who had entered upon it covertly, fenced it in, and marked it out in building sites. Neither having legal rights, they could not invoke the law; the last man held possession. There was no doubt that in due course of litigation and time both these ingenuous gentlemen would have been dispossessed in favor of the real owner, — myself, — but that course would be a protracted one. Following the usual custom of the locality, I paid a certain sum to the jumper to yield up peaceably *his* possession of the land, and began to build upon it. It might be reasonably supposed that the question was settled. But it was not. The house was nearly finished when, one morning, I was called out of my editorial sanctum by a pallid painter, looking even more white-leaded than usual, who informed me that my house was in the possession of five armed men! The entry had been made peaceably during the painters' absence to dinner under a wayside tree. When they returned, they had found their pots and brushes in the road, and an intimation

from the windows that their reëntrance would be forcibly resisted as a trespass.

I honestly believe that Rütli was more concerned than myself over this dispossession. While he loyally believed that I would get back my property, he was dreadfully grieved over the inevitable damage that would be done to the garden during this interval of neglect and carelessness. I even think he would have made a truce with my enemies, if they would only have let him look after his beloved plants. As it was, he kept a passing but melancholy surveillance of them, and was indeed a better spy of the actions of the intruders than any I could have employed. One day, to my astonishment, he brought me a moss-rose bud from a bush which had been trained against a column of the veranda. It appeared that he had called, from over the fence, the attention of one of the men to the neglected condition of the plant, and had obtained permission to "come in and tie it up." The men, being merely hirelings of the chief squatter, had no personal feeling, and I was not therefore surprised to hear that they presently allowed Rütli to come in occasionally and look after his precious "slips." If they had any suspicion of his great strength, it was probably offset by his peaceful avocation and his bland, childlike face. Meantime, I had begun the usual useless legal proceeding, but had also engaged a few rascals of my own to be ready to take advantage of any want of vigilance on the part of my adversaries. I never thought of Rütli in that connection any more than they had.

A few Sundays later I was sitting in the little tea-arbor of Rütli's nursery, peacefully smoking with him. Presently he took his long china-bowled pipe from his mouth, and, looking at me blandly over his yellow mustache, said: —

"You vonts sometimes to go in dot house, eh?"

I said, "Decidedly."

"Mit a revolver, and keep dot house dose men out?"

"Yes!"

"Vell! I put you in dot house — to-day!"

"Sunday?"

"Shoost so! It is a goot day! On der Suntay *dree* men vill out go to valk mit demselluffs, and visky trinken. *Two*," holding up two gigantic fingers, apparently only a shade or two smaller than his destined victims, "stay dere. Dose I lift de fence over."

I hastened to inform him that any violence attempted against the parties *while in possession*, although that possession was illegal, would, by a fatuity of the law, land him in the county jail. I said I would not hear of it.

"But suppose dere vos no fiolence? Suppose dose men vos villin', eh? How vos dot for high?"

"I don't understand."

"So! You shall *not* understand! Dot is better. Go away now and dell your men to coom dot house arount at halluff past dree. But *you* coom, mit yourselluff alone, shoost as if you vos *spazieren gehen*, for a valk, by dat fence at dree! Ven you shall dot front door vide open see, go in, and dere you vos! You vill der rest leef to me!"

It was in vain that I begged Rütli to divulge his plan, and pointed out again the danger of his technically breaking the law. But he was firm, assuring me that I myself would be a witness that no assault would be made. I looked into his clear, good-humored eyes, and assented. I had a burning desire to right my wrongs, but I think I also had considerable curiosity.

I passed a miserable quarter of an hour after I had warned my partisans, and then walked alone slowly down the broad leafy street towards the scene of contest. I have a very vivid recollection of my conflicting emotions. I did not believe that I would be killed; I had no distinct intention of killing any of my adversaries; but I had some considerable concern for my loyal friend Rütli, who I

foresaw might be in some peril from the revolver in my unpracticed hand. If I could only avoid shooting *him*, I would be satisfied. I remember that the bells were ringing for church, — a church of which my enemy, the chief squatter, was a deacon in good standing, — and I felt guiltily conscious of my revolver in my hip-pocket, as two or three church-goers passed me with their hymn-books in their hands. I walked leisurely, so as not to attract attention, and to appear at the exact time, a not very easy task in my youthful excitement. At last I reached the front gate with a beating heart. There was no one on the high veranda, which occupied three sides of the low one-storied house, nor in the garden before it. But the front door was open; I softly passed through the gate, darted up the veranda and into the house. A single glance around the hall and bare, deserted rooms, still smelling of paint, showed me it was empty, and, with my pistol in one hand and the other on the lock of the door, I stood inside, ready to bolt it against any one but Rütli. But where was *he?*

The sound of laughter and a noise like skylarking came from the rear of the house and the back yard. Then I suddenly heard Rütli's heavy tread on the veranda, but it was slow, deliberate, and so exaggerated in its weight that the whole house seemed to shake with it. Then from the window I beheld an extraordinary sight! It was Rütli, swaying from side to side, but steadily carrying with outstretched arms two of the squatter party, his hands tightly grasping their collars. Yet I believe his touch was as gentle as with the violets. His face was preternaturally grave; theirs, to my intense astonishment, while they hung passive from his arms, wore that fatuous, imbecile smile seen on the faces of those who lend themselves to tricks of acrobats and strong men in the arena. He slowly traversed the whole length of one side of the house, walked down the steps to the gate, and then gravely deposited them *outside*.

I heard him say, "Dot vins der pet, ain't it?" and immediately after the sharp click of the gate-latch.

Without understanding a thing that had happened, I rightly conceived this was the cue for my appearance with my revolver at the front door. As I opened it I still heard the sound of laughter, which, however, instantly stopped at a sentence from Rütli, which I could not hear. There was an oath, the momentary apparition of two furious and indignant faces over the fence; but these, however, seemed to be instantly extinguished and put down by the enormous palms of Rütli clapped upon their heads. There was a pause, and then Rütli turned around and quietly joined me in the doorway. But the gate was not again opened until the arrival of my partisans, when the house was clearly in my possession.

Safe inside with the door bolted, I turned eagerly to Rütli for an explanation. It then appeared that during his occasional visits to the garden he had often been an object of amusement and criticism to the men on account of his size, which seemed to them ridiculously inconsistent with his great good humor, gentleness, and delicacy of touch. They had doubted his strength and challenged his powers. He had responded once or twice before, lifting weights or even carrying one of his critics at arm's length for a few steps. But he had reserved his final feat for this day and this purpose. It was for a bet, which they had eagerly accepted, secure in their belief in his simplicity, the sincerity of his motives in coming there, and glad of the opportunity of a little Sunday diversion. In their security they had not locked the door when they came out, and had not noticed that *he* had opened it. This was his simple story; his only comment, "I haf von der pet, but I dinks I shall nod gollect der money." The two men did not return that afternoon, nor did their comrades. Whether they wisely conceived that a man who was so powerful in play might be

terrible in earnest; whether they knew that his act, in which they had been willing performers, had been witnessed by passing citizens, who supposed it was skylarking; or whether their employer got tired of his expensive occupation, I never knew. The public believed the latter; Rütli, myself, and the two men he had evicted alone kept our secret.

From that time Rütli and I became firm friends, and, long after I had no further need of his services in the recaptured house, I often found myself in the little tea-arbor of his prosperous nursery. He was frugal, sober, and industrious; small wonder that in that growing town he waxed rich, and presently opened a restaurant in the main street, connected with his market-garden, which became famous. His relations to me never changed with his changed fortunes; he was always the simple market-gardener and florist who had aided my first housekeeping, and stood by me in an hour of need. Of all things regarding himself he was singularly reticent; I do not think he had any confidants or intimates, even among his own countrymen, whom I believed to be German. But one day he quite accidentally admitted he was a Swiss. As a youthful admirer of the race I was delighted, and told him so, with the enthusiastic addition that I could now quite understand his independence, with his devoted adherence to another's cause. He smiled sadly, and astonished me by saying that he had not heard from Switzerland since he left six years before. He did not want to hear anything; he even avoided his countrymen lest he should. I was confounded.

"But," I said, "surely you have a longing to return to your country; all Swiss have! You will go back some day just to breathe the air of your native mountains."

"I shall go back some days," said Rütli, "after I have made mooch, mooch money, but not for dot air."

"What for, then?"

"For revenge — to get efen."

Surprised, and for a moment dismayed as I was, I could not help laughing. "Rütli and revenge!" Impossible! And to make it the more absurd, he was still smoking gently and regarding me with soft, complacent eyes. So unchanged was his face and manner that he might have told me he was going back to be married.

"You do not oonderstand," he said forgivingly. "Some days I shall dell to you id. Id is a story. You shall make it yourselluff for dose babers dot you write. It is not bretty, berhaps, ain't it, but it is droo. And de endt is not yet."

Only that Rütli never joked, except in a ponderous fashion with many involved sentences, I should have thought he was taking a good-humored rise out of me. But it was not funny. I am afraid I dismissed it from my mind as a revelation of something weak and puerile, quite inconsistent with his practical common sense and strong simplicity, and wished he had not alluded to it. I never asked him to tell me the story. It was a year later, and only when he had invited me to come to the opening of a new hotel, erected by him at a mountain spa of great resort, that he himself alluded to it.

The hotel was a wonderful affair, even for those days, and Rütli's outlay of capital convinced me that by this time he must have made the "mooch money" he coveted. Something of this was in my mind when we sat by the window of his handsomely furnished private office, overlooking the pines of a Californian cañon. I asked him if the scenery was like Switzerland.

"Ach! no!" he replied; "but I vill puild a hotel shoost like dis dare."

"Is that a part of your revenge?" I asked, with a laugh.

"Ah! so! a bart."

I felt relieved; a revenge so practical did not seem very malicious or idiotic. After a pause he puffed contempla-

tively at his pipe, and then said, "I dell you somedings of dot story now."

He began. I should like to tell it in his own particular English, mixed with American slang, but it would not convey the simplicity of the narrator. He was the son of a large family, who had lived for centuries in one of the highest villages in the Bernese Oberland. He attained his size and strength early, but with a singular distaste to use them in the rough regular work on the farm, although he was a great climber and mountaineer, and, what was at first overlooked as mere boyish fancy, had an insatiable love and curious knowledge of plants and flowers. He knew the haunts of Edelweiss, Alpine rose, and blue gentian, and had brought home rare and unknown blossoms from under the icy lips of glaciers. But as he did this when his time was supposed to be occupied in looking after the cows in the higher pastures and making cheeses, there was trouble in that hard-working, practical family. A giant with the tastes and disposition of a schoolgirl was an anomaly in a Swiss village. Unfortunately again, he was not studious; his record in the village school had been on a par with his manual work, and the family had not even the consolation of believing that they were fostering a genius. In a community where practical industry was the highest virtue, it was not strange, perhaps, that he was called "lazy" and "shiftless;" no one knew the long climbs and tireless vigils he had undergone in remote solitudes in quest of his favorites, or, knowing, forgave him for it. Abstemious, frugal, and patient as he was, even the crusts of his father's table were given him grudgingly. He often went hungry rather than ask the bread he had failed to earn. How his great frame was nurtured in those days he never knew; perhaps the giant mountains recognized some kin in him, and fed and strengthened him after their own fashion. Even his gentleness was confounded with cowardice. "Dot vos de hardtest," he said simply;

"it is not goot to be opligit to half crush your brudder, ven he would make a laugh of you to your sweetheart." The end came sooner than he expected, and, oddly enough, through this sweetheart. "Gottlieb," she said to him one day, "the English *Fremde* who stayed here last night met me when I was carrying some of those beautiful flowers you gave me. He asked me where they were to be found, and I told him only *you* knew. He wants to see you; go to him. It may be luck to you." Rütli went. The stranger, an English Alpine climber of scientific tastes, talked with him for an hour. At the end of that time, to everybody's astonishment, he engaged this hopeless idler as his personal guide for three months, at the sum of five francs a day! It was inconceivable, it was unheard of! The Englander was as mad as Gottlieb, whose intellect had always been under suspicion! The schoolmaster pursed up his lips, the pastor shook his head; no good could come of it; the family looked upon it as another freak of Gottlieb's, but there was one big mouth less to feed and more room in the kitchen, and they let him go. They parted from him as ungraciously as they had endured his presence.

Then followed two months of sunshine in Rütli's life, — association with his beloved plants, and the intelligent sympathy and direction of a cultivated man. Even in altitudes so dangerous that they had to take other and more experienced guides, Rütli was always at his master's side. That savant's collection of Alpine flora excelled all previous ones; he talked freely with Rütli of further work in the future, and relaxed his English reserve so far as to confide to him that the outcome of their collection and observation might be a book. He gave a flower a Latin name, in which even the ignorant and delighted Rütli could distinguish some likeness to his own. But the book was never compiled. In one of their later and more difficult ascents they and their two additional guides were overtaken by a sudden

storm. Swept from their feet down an ice-bound slope, Rütli alone of the roped-together party kept a foothold on the treacherous incline. Here this young Titan, with bleeding fingers clenched in a rock cleft, sustained the struggles and held up the lives of his companions by that precious thread for more than an hour. Perhaps he might have saved them, but in their desperate efforts to regain their footing the rope slipped upon a jagged edge of outcrop and parted as if cut by a knife. The two guides passed without an outcry into obscurity and death; Rütli, with a last despairing exertion, dragged to his own level his unconscious master, crippled by a broken leg.

Your true hero is apt to tell his tale simply. Rütli did not dwell upon these details, nor need I. Left alone upon a treacherous ice slope in benumbing cold, with a helpless man, eight hours afterwards he staggered, half blind, incoherent, and inarticulate, into a "shelter" hut, with the dead body of his master in his stiffened arms. The shelter-keepers turned their attention to Rütli, who needed it most. Blind and delirious, with scarce a chance for life, he was sent the next day to a hospital, where he lay for three months, helpless, imbecile, and unknown. The dead body of the Englishman was identified, and sent home; the bodies of the guides were recovered by their friends; but no one knew aught of Rütli, even his name. While the event was still fresh in the minds of those who saw him enter the hut with the body of his master, a paragraph appeared in a Berne journal recording the heroism of this nameless man. But it could not be corroborated nor explained by the demented hero, and was presently forgotten. Six months from the day he had left his home he was discharged cured. He had not a kreutzer in his pocket; he had never drawn his wages from his employer; he had preferred to have it in a lump sum that he might astonish his family on his return. His eyes were still weak, his

memory feeble; only his great physical strength remained through his long illness. A few sympathizing travelers furnished him the means to reach his native village, many miles away. He found his family had heard of the loss of the Englishman and the guides, and had believed he was one of them. Already he was forgotten.

"Ven you vos once peliefed to be det," said Rütli, after a philosophic pause and puff, "it vos not goot to ondeceif beoples. You oopset somedings, soomdimes always. Der hole dot you hef made in der grount, among your frients and your family, vos covered up alretty. You are loocky if you vill not fint some vellars shtanding upon id! My frent, ven you vos *dink* det, *shtay* det, *be* det, and you vill lif happy!"

"But your sweetheart?" I said eagerly.

A slight gleam of satire stole into Rütli's light eyes. "My sweetheart, ven I vos dinks det, is der miller engaged do bromply! It is mooch better dan to a man dot vos boor and plint and grazy! So! Vell, der next day I pids dem goot-py, und from der door I say, 'I am det now; but ven I next comes pack alife, I shall dis village py! der lants, der houses all togedders. And den for yourselluffs look oudt!'"

"Then that's your revenge? That is what you really intend to do?" I said, half laughing, yet with an uneasy recollection of his illness and enfeebled mind.

"Yes. Look here! I show you somedings." He opened a drawer of his desk and took out what appeared to be some diagrams, plans, and a small water-colored map, like a surveyor's tracing. "Look," he said, laying his finger on the latter, "dat is a map from my fillage. I hef myselluff made it out from my memory. Dot," pointing to a blank space, "is der mountain side high up, so far. It is no goot until I vill a tunnel make or der grade lefel. Dere vas mine fader's house, dere vos der church, der school-house, dot vos de burgomaster's house," he went on, point-

ing to the respective plots in this old curving parallelogram of the mountain shelf. "So was the fillage when I leave him on the 5th of March, eighteen hundred and feefty. Now you shall see him shoost as I vill make him ven I go back." He took up another plan, beautifully drawn and colored, and evidently done by a professional hand. It was a practical yet almost fairylike transformation of the same spot! The narrow mountain shelf was widened by excavation, and a boulevard stretched on either side. A great hotel, not unlike the one in which we sat, stood in an open terrace, with gardens and fountains, — the site of his father's house. Blocks of pretty dwellings, shops, and cafés filled the intermediate space. I laid down the paper.

"How long have you had this idea?"

"Efer since I left dere, fifteen years ago."

"But your father and mother may be dead by this time?"

"So, but dere vill be odders. Und der blace — it vill remain."

"But all this will cost a fortune, and you are not sure" —

"I know shoost vot id vill gost, to a cend."

"And you think you can ever afford to carry out your idea?"

"I *vill* afford id. Ven you shall make yet some moneys and go to Europe, you shall see. I *vill* infite you dere first. Now coom and look der house around."

. . . . . .

I did *not* make "some moneys," but I *did* go to Europe. Three years after this last interview with Rütli I was coming from Interlaken to Berne by rail. I had not heard from him, and I had forgotten the name of his village, but as I looked up from the paper I was reading, I suddenly recognized him in the further end of the same compartment I occupied. His recognition of me was evidently as sudden and unexpected. After our first hand-grasp and greeting, I said: —

"And how about our new village?"

"Dere is no fillage."

"What! You have given up the idea?"

"Yes. There is no fillage, olt or new."

"I don't understand."

He looked at me a moment. "You have not heard?"

"No."

He gently picked up a little local guide-book that lay in my lap, and turning its leaves, pointed to a page, and read as follows: —

"5 M. beyond, the train passes a curve R., where a fine view of the lake may be seen. A little to the R. rise the steep slopes of the ——, the scene of a terrible disaster. At three o'clock on March 5, 1850, the little village of ——, lying midway of the slope, with its population of 950 souls, was completely destroyed by a landslip from the top of the mountain. So sudden was the catastrophe that not a single escape is recorded. A large portion of the mountain crest, as will be observed when it is seen in profile, descended to the valley, burying the unfortunate village to a depth variously estimated at from 1000 ft. to 1800 ft. The geological causes which produced this extraordinary displacement have been fully discussed, but the greater evidence points to the theory of subterranean glaciers. 5 M. beyond —— the train crosses the R. bridge."

I laid down the guide-book in breathless astonishment.

"And you never heard of this in all these years?"

"Nefer! I asked no questions, I read no pooks. I have no ledders from home."

"And yet you"— I stopped, I could not call him a fool; neither could I, in the face of his perfect composure and undisturbed eyes, exhibit a concern greater than his own. An uneasy recollection of what he confessed had been his mental condition immediately after his accident came over me. Had he been the victim of a strange hallucination

regarding his house and family all these years? Were these dreams of revenge, this fancy of creating a new village, only an outcome of some shock arising out of the disaster itself, which he had long since forgotten?

He was looking from the window. "Coom," he said, "ve are near der blace. I vill show id to you." He rose and passed out to the rear platform. We were in the rear car, and a new panorama of the lake and mountains flashed upon us at every curve of the line. I followed him. Presently he pointed to what appeared to be a sheer wall of rock and stunted vegetation towering two or three thousand feet above us, which started out of a gorge we were passing. "Dere it vos!" he said. I saw the vast stretch of rock face rising upward and onward, but nothing else. No débris, no ruins, nor even a swelling or rounding of the mountain-flank over that awful tomb. Yet, stay! as we dashed across the gorge, and the face of the mountain shifted, high up, the sky-line was slightly broken as if a few inches, a mere handful, of the crest was crumbled away. And then — both gorge and mountain vanished.

I was still embarrassed and uneasy, and knew not what to say to this man at my side, whose hopes and ambitions had been as quickly overthrown and buried, and whose life-dream had as quickly vanished. But he himself, taking his pipe from his lips, broke the silence.

"It vos a narrow esgabe!"

"What was?"

"Vy, dis dings. If I had stayed in my fader's house, I vould haf been det for goot, and perried too! Somedimes dose dings cooms oudt apout right, don't id?"

Unvanquished philosopher! As we stood there looking at the flying landscape and sinking lesser hills, one by one the great snow peaks slowly arose behind them, lifting themselves, as if to take a last wondering look at the man they had triumphed over, but had not subdued.

"THEN it is n't a question of property or next of kin?" said the consul.

"Lord! no," said the lady vivaciously. "Why, goodness me! I reckon old Desborough could, at any time before he died, have 'bought up' or 'bought out' the whole lot of his relatives on this side of the big pond, no matter what they were worth. No, it 's only a matter of curiosity and just sociableness."

The American consul at St. Kentigorn felt much relieved. He had feared it was only the old story of delusive quests for imaginary estates and impossible inheritances which he had confronted so often in nervous, wan-eyed enthusiasts and obstreperous claimants from his own land. Certainly there was no suggestion of this in the richly dressed and be-diamonded matron before him, nor in her pretty daughter, charming in a Paris frock, alive with the consciousness of beauty and admiration, and yet a little *ennuyé* from gratified indulgence. He knew the mother to be the wealthy widow of a New York millionaire, that she was traveling for pleasure in Europe, and a chance meeting with her at dinner a few nights before had led to this half-capricious, half-confidential appointment at the consulate.

"No," continued Mrs. Desborough; "Mr. Desborough came to America, when a small boy, with an uncle who died some years ago. Mr. Desborough never seemed to hanker much after his English relatives as long as I knew him, but now that I and Sadie are over here, why we guessed we might look 'em up and sort of sample 'em! Desborough 's rather a good name," added the lady, with

a complacency that, however, had a suggestion of query in it.

"Yes," said the consul; "from the French, I fancy."

"Mr. Desborough was English — very English," corrected the lady.

"I mean it may be an old Norman name," said the consul.

"Norman's good enough for *me*," said the daughter, reflecting. "We'll just settle it as Norman. I never thought about that *Des*."

"Only you may find it called 'Debborough' here, and spelt so," said the consul, smiling.

Miss Desborough lifted her pretty shoulders and made a charming grimace. "Then we won't acknowledge 'em. No Debborough for me!"

"You might put an advertisement in the papers, like the 'next of kin' notice, intimating, in the regular way, that they would 'hear of something to their advantage,' — as they certainly would," continued the consul, with a bow. "It would be such a refreshing change to the kind of thing I'm accustomed to, don't you know, — this idea of one of my countrywomen coming over just to benefit English relatives! By Jove! I would n't mind undertaking the whole thing for you — it 's such a novelty." He was quite carried away with the idea.

But the two ladies were far from participating in this joyous outlook. "No," said Mrs. Desborough promptly, "that would n't do. You see," she went on with superb frankness, "that would be just giving ourselves away, and saying who *we* were before we found out what *they* were like. Mr. Desborough was all right in *his* way, but we don't know anything about his *folks!* We ain't here on a mission to improve the Desboroughs, nor to gather in any 'lost tribes.'"

It was evident that, in spite of the humor of the situa-

tion and the levity of the ladies, there was a characteristic national practicalness about them, and the consul, with a sigh, at last gave the address of one or two responsible experts in genealogical inquiry, as he had often done before. He felt it was impossible to offer any advice to ladies as thoroughly capable of managing their own affairs as his fair countrywomen, yet he was not without some curiosity to know the result of their practical sentimental quest. That he should ever hear of them again he doubted. He knew that after their first loneliness had worn off in their gregarious gathering at a London hotel they were not likely to consort with their own country people, who indeed were apt to fight shy of one another, and even to indulge in invidious criticism of one another when admitted in that society to which they were all equally strangers. So he took leave of them on their way back to London with the belief that their acquaintance terminated with that brief incident. But he was mistaken.

In the year following he was spending his autumn vacation at a country house. It was an historic house, and had always struck him as being — even in that country of historic seats — a singular example of the vicissitudes of English manorial estates and the mutations of its lords. His host in his prime had been recalled from foreign service to unexpectedly succeed to an uncle's title and estate. That estate, however, had come into the possession of the uncle only through his marriage with the daughter of an old family whose portraits still looked down from the walls upon the youngest and alien branch. There were likenesses, effigies, memorials, and reminiscences of still older families who had occupied it through forfeiture by war or the favoritism of kings, and in its stately cloisters and ruined chapel was still felt the dead hand of its evicted religious founders, which could not be shaken off.

It was this strange individuality that affected all who

saw it. For, however changed were those within its walls, whoever were its inheritors or inhabiters, Scrooby Priory never changed nor altered its own character. However incongruous or ill-assorted the portraits that looked from its walls, — so ill met that they might have flown at one another's throats in the long nights when the family were away, — the great house itself was independent of them all. The be-wigged, be-laced, and be-furbelowed of one day's gathering, the round-headed, steel-fronted, and prim-kerchiefed congregation of another day, and even the black-coated, bare-armed, and bare-shouldered assemblage of to-day had no effect on the austerities of the Priory. Modern houses might show the tastes and prepossessions of their dwellers, might have caught some passing trick of the hour, or have recorded the augmented fortunes or luxuriousness of the owner, but Scrooby Priory never! No one had dared even to disturb its outer rigid integrity; the breaches of time and siege were left untouched. It held its calm indifferent sway over all who passed its low-arched portals, and the consul was fain to believe that he — a foreign visitor — was no more alien to the house than its present owner.

"I 'm expecting a very charming compatriot of yours to-morrow," said Lord Beverdale, as they drove from the station together. "You must tell me what to show her."

"I should think any countrywoman of mine would be quite satisfied with the Priory," said the consul, glancing thoughtfully towards the pile dimly seen through the park.

"I should n't like her to be bored here," continued Beverdale. "Algy met her at Rome, where she was occupying a palace with her mother, — they 're very rich, you know. He found she was staying with Lady Minever at Hedham Towers, and I went over and invited her with a little party. She 's a Miss Desborough."

The consul gave a slight start, and was aware that Beverdale was looking at him.

"Perhaps you know her?" said Beverdale.

"Just enough to agree with you that she is charming," said the consul. "I dined with them, and saw them at the consulate."

"Oh, yes; I always forget you are a consul. Then, of course, you know all about them. I suppose they 're very rich, and in society over there?" said Beverdale, in a voice that was quite animated.

It was on the consul's lips to say that the late Mr. Desborough was an Englishman, and even to speak playfully of their proposed quest, but a sudden instinct withheld him. After all, perhaps it was only a caprice, or idea, they had forgotten, — perhaps, who knows? — that they were already ashamed of. They had evidently "got on" in English society, if that was their real intent, and doubtless Miss Desborough, by this time, was quite as content with the chance of becoming related to the Earl of Beverdale, through his son and heir, Algernon, as if they had found a real Lord Desborough among their own relatives. The consul knew that Lord Beverdale was not a rich man, that like most men of old family he was not a slave to class prejudice; indeed, the consul had seen very few noblemen off the stage or out of the pages of a novel who were. So he said, with a slight affectation of authority, that there was as little doubt of the young lady's wealth as there was of her personal attractions.

They were nearing the house through a long avenue of chestnuts whose variegated leaves were already beginning to strew the ground beneath, and they could see the vista open upon the mullioned windows of the Priory, lighted up by the yellow October sunshine. In that sunshine stood a tall, clean-limbed young fellow, dressed in a shooting-suit, whom the consul recognized at once as Lord Algernon, the

son of his companion. As if to accent the graces of this vision of youth and vigor, near him, in the shadow, an old man had halted, hat in hand, still holding the rake with which he had been gathering the dead leaves in the avenue; his back bent, partly with years, partly with the obeisance of a servitor. There was something so marked in this contrast, in this old man standing in the shadow of the fading year, himself as dried and withered as the leaves he was raking, yet pausing to make his reverence to this passing sunshine of youth and prosperity in the presence of his coming master, that the consul, as they swept by, looked after him with a stirring of pain.

"Rather an old man to be still at work," said the consul.

Beverdale laughed. "You must not let him hear you say so; he considers himself quite as fit as any younger man in the place, and, by Jove! though he 's nearly eighty, I 'm inclined to believe it. He 's not one of our people, however; he comes from the village, and is taken on at odd times, partly to please himself. His great aim is to be independent of his children, — he has a granddaughter who is one of the maids at the Priory, — and to keep himself out of the workhouse. He does not come from these parts, — somewhere farther north, I fancy. But he 's a tough lot, and has a deal of work in him yet."

"Seems to be going a bit stale lately," said Lord Algernon, "and I think is getting a little queer in his head. He has a trick of stopping and staring straight ahead, at times, when he seems to go off for a minute or two. There!" continued the young man, with a light laugh. "I say! he 's doing it now!" They both turned quickly and gazed at the bent figure — not fifty yards away — standing in exactly the same attitude as before. But, even as they gazed, he slowly lifted his rake and began his monotonous work again.

At Scrooby Priory, the consul found that the fame of his fair countrywoman had indeed preceded her, and that the other guests were quite as anxious to see Miss Desborough as he was. One of them had already met her in London; another knew her as one of the house party at the Duke of Northforeland's, where she had been a central figure. Some of her naïve sallies and frank criticisms were repeated with great unction by the gentlemen, and with some slight trepidation and a "fearful joy" by the ladies. He was more than ever convinced that mother and daughter had forgotten their lineal Desboroughs, and he resolved to leave any allusion to it to the young lady herself.

She, however, availed herself of that privilege the evening after her arrival. "Who 'd have thought of meeting *you* here?" she said, sweeping her skirts away to make room for him on the sofa. "It 's a coon's age since I saw you, — not since you gave us that letter to those genealogical gentlemen in London."

The consul hoped that it had proved successful.

"Yes, but maw guessed we did n't care to go back to Hengist and Horsa, and when they let loose a lot of 'Debboroughs' and 'Daybrooks' upon us, maw kicked! We 've got a drawing ten yards long, that looks like a sour apple tree, with lots of Desboroughs hanging up on the branches like last year's pippins, and I guess about as worm-eaten. We took that well enough, but when it came to giving us a map of straight lines and dashes with names written under them like an old Morse telegraph slip, struck by lightning, then maw and I guessed that it made us tired.

"You know," she went on, opening her clear gray eyes on the consul, with a characteristic flash of shrewd good sense through her quaint humor, "we never reckoned where this thing would land us, and we found we were paying a hundred pounds, not only for the Desboroughs, but all they 'd *married*, and their *children*, and children's

children, and there were a lot of outsiders we 'd never heard of, nor wanted to hear of. Maw once thought she 'd got on the trail of a Plantagenet, and followed it keen, until she found she had been reading the dreadful thing upside down. Then we concluded we would n't take any more stock in the family until it had risen."

During this speech the consul could not help noticing that, although her attitude was playfully confidential to him, her voice really was pitched high enough to reach the ears of smaller groups around her, who were not only following her with the intensest admiration, but had shamelessly abandoned their own conversation, and had even faced towards her. Was she really posing in her naïveté? There was a certain mischievous, even aggressive, consciousness in her pretty eyelids. Then she suddenly dropped both eyes and voice, and said to the consul in a genuine aside, "I like this sort of thing much better."

The consul looked puzzled. "What sort of thing?"

"Why, all these swell people, don't you see? those pictures on the walls! this elegant room! everything that has come down from the past, all ready and settled for you, you know — ages ago! Something you have n't to pick up for yourself and worry over."

But here the consul pointed out that the place itself was not "ancestral" as regarded the present earl, and that even the original title of his predecessors had passed away from it. "In fact, it came into the family by one of those 'outsiders' you deprecate. But I dare say you 'd find the place quite as comfortable with Lord Beverdale for a host as you would if you had found out he were a cousin," he added.

"Better," said the young lady frankly.

"I suppose your mother participates in these preferences?" said the consul, with a smile.

"No," said Miss Desborough, with the same frankness, "I think maw 's rather cut up at not finding a Desborough.

She was invited down here, but *she's* rather independent, you know, so she allowed I could take care of myself, while she went off to stay with the old Dowager Lady Mistowe, who thinks maw a very proper womanly person. I made maw mad by telling her that 's just what old Lady Mistowe would say of her cook — for I can't stand these people's patronage. However, I should n't wonder if I was invited here as a 'most original person.'"

But here Lord Algernon came up to implore her to sing them one of "those plantation songs;" and Miss Desborough, with scarcely a change of voice or manner, allowed herself to be led to the piano. The consul had little chance to speak with her again, but he saw enough that evening to convince him not only that Lord Algernon was very much in love with her, but that the fact had been equally and complacently accepted by the family and guests. That her present visit was only an opportunity for a formal engagement was clear to every woman in the house, — not excepting, I fear, even the fair subject of gossip herself. Yet she seemed so unconcerned and self-contained that the consul wondered if she really cared for Lord Algernon. And having thus wondered, he came to the conclusion that it did n't much matter, for the happiness of so practically organized a young lady, if she loved him or not.

It is highly probable that Miss Sadie Desborough had not even gone so far as to ask herself that question. She awoke the next morning with a sense of easy victory and calm satisfaction that had, however, none of the transports of affection. Her taste was satisfied by the love of a handsome young fellow, — a typical Englishman, — who, if not exactly original or ideal, was, she felt, of an universally accepted, "hall-marked" standard, the legitimate outcome of a highly ordered, carefully guarded civilization, whose repose was the absence of struggle or ambition; a man whose regular features were not yet differentiated from the rest of

his class by any of those disturbing lines which people call character. Everything was made ready for her, without care or preparation; she had not even an ideal to realize or to modify. She could slip without any jar or dislocation into this life which was just saved from self-indulgence and sybaritic luxury by certain conventional rules of activity, and the occupation of amusement which, as obligations of her position, even appeared to suggest the novel aspect of a *duty!* She could accept all this without the sense of being an intruder in an unbroken lineage, — thanks to the consul's account of the Beverdales' inheritance. She already pictured herself as the mistress of this fair domain, the custodian of its treasures and traditions, and the dispenser of its hospitalities, but — as she conscientiously believed — without pride or vanity, in her position; only an intense and thoughtful appreciation of it. Nor did she dream of ever displaying it ostentatiously before her less fortunate fellow countrywomen; on the contrary, she looked forward to their possible criticism of her casting off all transatlantic ties with an uneasy consciousness that was perhaps her nearest approach to patriotism. Yet, again, she reasoned that, as her father was an Englishman, she was only returning to her old home. As to her mother, she had already comforted herself by noticing certain discrepancies in that lady's temperament, which led her to believe that she herself alone inherited her father's nature, — for her mother was, of course, distinctly American! So little conscious was she of any possible snobbishness in this belief, that in her superb naïveté she would have argued the point with the consul, and employed a wit and dialect that were purely American.

She had slipped out of the Priory early that morning that she might enjoy alone, unattended and unciceroned, the aspect of that vast estate which might be hers for the mere accepting. Perhaps there was some instinct of delicacy in her avoiding Lord Algernon that morning; not wishing, as

she herself might have frankly put it, "to take stock" of his inheritance in his presence. As she passed into the garden through the low postern door, she turned to look along the stretching façade of the main building, with the high stained windows of its banqueting-hall and the state chamber where a king had slept. Even in that crisp October air, and with the green of its ivied battlements against the gold of the distant wood, it seemed to lie in the languid repose of an eternal summer. She hurried on down the other terrace into the Italian garden, a quaint survival of past grandeur, passed the great orangery and numerous conservatories, making a crystal hamlet in themselves, — seeing everywhere the same luxury. But it was a luxury that she fancied was redeemed from the vulgarity of ostentation by the long custom of years and generations, so unlike the millionaire palaces of her own land; and, in her enthusiasm, she even fancied it was further sanctified by the grim monastic founders who had once been content with bread and pulse in the crumbling and dismantled refectory. In the plenitude of her feelings she felt a slight recognition of some beneficent being who had rolled this golden apple at her feet, and felt as if she really should like to "do good" in her sphere.

It so chanced that, passing through a small gate in the park, she saw walking, a little ahead of her, a young girl whom she at once recognized as a Miss Amelyn, one of the guests of the evening before. Miss Desborough remembered that she played the accompaniment of one or two songs upon the piano, and had even executed a long solo during the general conversation, without attention from the others, and apparently with little irritation to herself, subsiding afterwards into an armchair, quite on the fringe of other people's conversation. She had been called "my dear" by one or two dowagers, and by her Christian name by the earl, and had a way of impalpably melting out of sight at

his class by any of those disturbing lines which people call character. Everything was made ready for her, without care or preparation; she had not even an ideal to realize or to modify. She could slip without any jar or dislocation into this life which was just saved from self-indulgence and sybaritic luxury by certain conventional rules of activity, and the occupation of amusement which, as obligations of her position, even appeared to suggest the novel aspect of a *duty!* She could accept all this without the sense of being an intruder in an unbroken lineage, — thanks to the consul's account of the Beverdales' inheritance. She already pictured herself as the mistress of this fair domain, the custodian of its treasures and traditions, and the dispenser of its hospitalities, but — as she conscientiously believed — without pride or vanity, in her position; only an intense and thoughtful appreciation of it. Nor did she dream of ever displaying it ostentatiously before her less fortunate fellow countrywomen; on the contrary, she looked forward to their possible criticism of her casting off all transatlantic ties with an uneasy consciousness that was perhaps her nearest approach to patriotism. Yet, again, she reasoned that, as her father was an Englishman, she was only returning to her old home. As to her mother, she had already comforted herself by noticing certain discrepancies in that lady's temperament, which led her to believe that she herself alone inherited her father's nature, — for her mother was, of course, distinctly American! So little conscious was she of any possible snobbishness in this belief, that in her superb naïveté she would have argued the point with the consul, and employed a wit and dialect that were purely American.

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times. These trifles led Miss Desborough to conclude that she was some kind of dependent or poor relation. Here was an opportunity to begin her work of "doing good." She quickened her pace and overtook Miss Amelyn.

"Let me walk with you," she said graciously.

The young English girl smiled assent, but looked her surprise at seeing the cynosure of last night's eyes unattended.

"Oh," said Sadie, answering the mute query, "I didn't want to be 'shown round' by anybody, and I'm not going to bore *you* with asking to see sights either. We'll just walk together; wherever *you're* going is good enough for me."

"I'm going as far as the village," said Miss Amelyn, looking down doubtfully at Sadie's smart French shoes, — "if you care to walk so far."

Sadie noticed that her companion was more solidly booted, and that her straight, short skirts, although less stylish than her own, had a certain character, better fitted to the freer outdoor life of the country. But she only said, however, "The village will do," and gayly took her companion's arm.

"But I'm afraid you'll find it very uninteresting, for I am going to visit some poor cottages," persisted Miss Amelyn, with a certain timid ingenuousness of manner which, however, was as distinct as Miss Desborough's bolder frankness. "I promised the rector's daughter to take her place to-day."

"And I feel as if I was ready to pour oil and wine to any extent," said Miss Desborough, "so come along!"

Miss Amelyn laughed, and yet glanced around her timidly, as if she thought that Miss Desborough ought to have a larger and more important audience. Then she continued more confidentially and boldly, "But it is n't at all like 'slumming,' you know. These poor people here are not very bad, and are not at all extraordinary."

"Never mind," said Sadie, hurrying her along. After a pause she went on, "You know the Priory very well, I guess?"

"I lived there when I was a little girl, with my aunt, the Dowager Lady Beverdale," said Miss Amelyn. "When my cousin Fred, who was the young heir, died, and the present Lord Beverdale succeeded, — *he* never expected it, you know, for there were two lives, his two elder brothers, besides poor Fred's, between, but they both died, — we went to live in the Dower House."

"The Dower House?" repeated Sadie.

"Yes, Lady Beverdale's separate property."

"But I thought all this property — the Priory — came into the family through *her*."

"It did — this was the Amelyns' place; but the oldest son or nearest male heir always succeeds to the property and title."

"Do you mean to say that the present Lord Beverdale turned that old lady out?"

Miss Amelyn looked shocked. "I mean to say," she said gravely, "Lady Beverdale would have had to go when her own son became of age, had he lived." She paused, and then said timidly, "Is n't it that way in America?"

"Dear, no!" Miss Desborough had a faint recollection that there was something in the Constitution or the Declaration of Independence against primogeniture. "No! the men have n't it *all* their own way *there* — not much!"

Miss Amelyn looked as if she did not care to discuss this problem. After a few moments Sadie continued, "You and Lord Algernon are pretty old friends, I guess?"

"No," replied Miss Amelyn. "He came once or twice to the Priory for the holidays, when he was quite a boy at Marlborough, — for the family were n't very well off, and his father was in India. He was a very shy boy, and of course no one ever thought of him succeeding."

Miss Desborough felt half inclined to be pleased with this, and yet half inclined to resent this possible snubbing of her future husband. But they were nearing the village, and Miss Amelyn turned the conversation to the object of her visit. It was a new village, — an unhandsome village, for all that it stood near one of the gates of the park. It had been given over to some mines that were still worked in its vicinity, and to the railway, which the uncle of the present earl had resisted; but the railway had triumphed, and the station for Scrooby Priory was there. There was a grim church, of a blackened or weather-beaten stone, on the hill, with a few grim Amelyns reposing cross-legged in the chancel, but the character of the village was as different from the Priory as if it were in another county. They stopped at the rectory, where Miss Amelyn provided herself with certain doles and gifts, which the American girl would have augmented with a five-pound note but for Miss Amelyn's horrified concern. "As many shillings would do, and they would be as grateful," she said. "More they would n't understand."

"Then keep it, and dole it out as you like," said Sadie quickly.

"But I don't think that — that Lord Beverdale would quite approve," hesitated Miss Amelyn.

The pretty brow of her companion knit, and her gray eyes flashed vivaciously. "What has *he* to do with it?" she said pertly; "besides, you say these are not *his* poor. Take that five-pound note — or — I 'll *double it*, get it changed into sovereigns at the station, and hand 'em round to every man, woman, and child."

Miss Amelyn hesitated. The American girl looked capable of doing what she said; perhaps it was a national way of almsgiving! She took the note, with the mental reservation of making a full confession to the rector and Lord Beverdale.

She was right in saying that the poor of Scrooby village were not interesting. There was very little squalor or degradation; their poverty seemed not a descent, but a condition to which they had been born; the faces which Sadie saw were dulled and apathetic rather than sullen or rebellious; they stood up when Miss Amelyn entered, paying *her* the deference, but taking little note of the pretty butterfly who was with her, or rather submitting to her frank curiosity with that dull consent of the poor, as if they had lost even the sense of privacy, or a right to respect. It seemed to the American girl that their poverty was more indicated by what they were *satisfied* with than what she thought they *missed*. It is to be feared that this did not add to Sadie's sympathy; all the beggars she had seen in America wanted all they could get, and she felt as if she were confronted with an inferior animal.

"There 's a wonderful old man lives here," said Miss Amelyn, as they halted before a stone and thatch cottage quite on the outskirts of the village. "We can't call him one of our poor, for he still works, although over eighty, and it 's his pride to keep out of the poorhouse, and, as he calls it, 'off' the hands of his granddaughters. But we manage to do something for *them*, and we hope he profits by it. One of them is at the Priory; they 're trying to make a maid of her, but her queer accent — they 're from the north — is against her with the servants. I am afraid we won't see old Debs, for he 's at work again today, though the doctor has warned him."

"Debs! What a funny name!"

"Yes, but as many of these people cannot read or write, the name is carried by the ear, and not always correctly. Some of the railway navvies, who come from the north as he does, call him 'Debbers.'"

They were obliged to descend into the cottage, which was so low that it seemed to have sunk into the earth until

its drooping eaves of thatch mingled with the straw heap beside it. Debs was not at home. But his granddaughter was there, who, after a preliminary "bob," continued the stirring of the pot before the fire in tentative silence.

"I am sorry to find that your grandfather has gone to work again in spite of the doctor's orders," said Miss Amelyn.

The girl continued to stir the pot, and then said without looking up, but as if also continuing a train of aggressive thoughts with her occupation: "Eay, but 'e 's so set oop in 'issen 'ee döan't take orders from nobbut — leastways doctor. Möinds 'em now moor nor a floy. Says 'ee knaws there nowt wrong wi' 'is 'eart. Mout be roight — hows'iver, sarten sewer, 'is *'ead* 's a' in a muddle! Toims 'ee goes off stamrin' and starin' at nowt, as if 'ee a'nt a n'aporth o' sense. Hows'iver I be doing my duty by 'em — and 'ere 's 'is porritch when a' cooms — 'gin a' be sick or maad."

What the American understood of the girl's speech and manner struck her as having very little sympathy with either her aged relative or her present visitor. And there was a certain dogged selfish independence about her that Miss Desborough half liked and half resented. However, Miss Amelyn did not seem to notice it, and, after leaving a bottle of port for the grandfather, she took her leave and led Sadie away. As they passed into the village a carriage, returning to the Priory, filled with their fellow guests, dashed by, but was instantly pulled up at a word from Lord Algernon, who leaped from the vehicle, hat in hand, and implored the fair truant and her companion to join them.

"We 're just making a tour around Windover Hill, and back to luncheon," he said, with a rising color. "We missed you awfully! If we had known you were so keen on 'good works,' and so early at it, by Jove! we 'd have got up a 'slummin' party,' and all joined!"

"And you have n't seen half," said Lord Bevordale

from the box. "Miss Amelyn 's too partial to the village. There 's an old drunken retired poacher somewhere in a hut in Crawley Woods, whom it 's death to approach, except with a large party. There 's malignant diphtheria over at the South Farm, eight down with measles at the keeper's, and an old woman who has been bedridden for years."

But Miss Desborough was adamant, though sparkling. She thanked him, but said she had just seen an old woman "who had been lying in bed for twenty years, and had n't spoken the truth once!" She proposed "going outside of Lord Beverdale's own preserves of grain-fed poor," and starting up her own game. She would return in time for luncheon, — if she could; if not, she "should annex the gruel of the first kind incapable she met."

Yet, actually, she was far from displeased at being accidentally discovered by these people while following out her capricious whim of the morning. One or two elder ladies, who had fought shy of her frocks and her frankness the evening before, were quite touched now by this butterfly who was willing to forego the sunlight of society, and soil her pretty wings on the haunts of the impoverished, with only a single companion, — of her own sex! — and smiled approvingly. And in her present state of mind, remembering her companion's timid attitude towards Lord Beverdale's opinions, she was not above administering this slight snub to him in her presence.

When they had driven away, with many regrets, Miss Amelyn was deeply concerned. "I am afraid," she said, with timid conscientiousness, "I have kept you from going with them. And you must be bored with what you have seen, I know. I don't believe you really care one bit for it, — and you are only doing it to please me."

"Trot out the rest of your show," said Sadie promptly, "and we 'll wind up by lunching with the rector."

"He 'd be too delighted," said Miss Amelyn, with disaster written all over her girlish, truthful face, "but — but — you know — it really would n't be quite right to Lord Beverdale. You 're his principal guest — you know, and — they 'd think I had taken you off."

"Well," said Miss Desborough impetuously, "what 's the matter with that inn, — the Red Lion? We can get a sandwich there, I guess. I 'm not *very* hungry."

Miss Amelyn looked horrified for a moment, and then laughed; but immediately became concerned again. "No! listen to me, *really* now! Let me finish my round alone! You 'll have ample time if you go *now* to reach the Priory for luncheon. Do, please! It would be ever so much better for everybody. I feel quite guilty as it is, and I suppose I am already in Lord Beverdale's black books."

The trouble in the young girl's face was unmistakable, and as it suited Miss Desborough's purpose just as well to show her independence by returning, as she had set out, alone, she consented to go. Miss Amelyn showed her a short cut across the park, and they separated — to meet at dinner. In this brief fellowship, the American girl had kept a certain supremacy and half-fascination over the English girl, even while she was conscious of an invincible character in Miss Amelyn entirely different from and superior to her own. Certainly there was a difference in the two peoples. Why else this inherited conscientious reverence for Lord Beverdale's position, shown by Miss Amelyn, which she, an American alive to its practical benefits, could not understand? Would Miss Amelyn and Lord Algernon have made a better match? The thought irritated her, even while she knew that she herself possessed the young man's affections, the power to marry him, and, as she believed, kept her own independence in the matter.

As she entered the iron gates at the lower end of the park, and glanced at the interwoven cipher and crest of

the Amelyns still above, she was conscious that the wind was blowing more chill, and that a few clouds had gathered. As she walked on down the long winding avenue, the sky became overcast, and, in one of those strange contrasts of the English climate, the glory of the whole day went out with the sunshine. The woods suddenly became wrinkled and gray, the distant hills sombre, the very English turf beneath her feet grew brown; a mile and a half away, through the opening of the trees, the west part of the Priory looked a crumbling, ivy-eaten ruin. A few drops of rain fell. She hurried on. Suddenly she remembered that the avenue made a long circuit before approaching the house, and that its lower end, where she was walking, was but a fringe of the park. Consequently there must be a short cut across some fields and farm buildings to the back of the park and the Priory. She at once diverged to the right, presently found a low fence, which she clambered over, and again found a footpath which led to a stile. Crossing that, she could see the footpath now led directly to the Priory, — now a grim and austere looking pile in the suddenly dejected landscape, — and that it was probably used only by the servants and farmers. A gust of wind brought some swift needles of rain to her cheek; she could see the sad hills beyond the Priory already veiling their faces; she gathered her skirts and ran. The next field was a long one, but beside the further stile was a small clump of trees, the only ones between her and the park. Hurrying on to that shelter, she saw that the stile was already occupied by a tall but bent figure, holding a long stick in his hand, which gave him the appearance, against the horizon, of the figure of Time leaning on his scythe. As she came nearer she saw it was, indeed, an old man, half resting on his rake. He was very rugged and weather-beaten, and, although near the shelter of the trees, apparently unmindful of the rain that was falling on his bald

Although it was plain to Sadie that the old man, in his wandering perception, had mistaken her for his granddaughter in service at the Priory, there was still enough rudeness in his speech for her to have resented it. But, strange to say, there was a kind of authority in it that touched her with an uneasiness and repulsion that was stronger than any other feeling. "I think you have mistaken me for some one else," she said hurriedly, yet wondering why she had admitted it, and even irritated at the admission. "I am a stranger here, a visitor at the Priory. I called with Miss Amelyn at your cottage, and saw your other granddaughter; that 's how I knew your name."

The old man's face changed. A sad, senile smile of hopeless bewilderment crept into his hard mouth; he plucked his limp cap from his head and let it hang submissively in his fingers, as if it were his sole apology. Then he tried to straighten himself, and said, "Naw offins, miss, naw offins! If tha knaws mea tha 'll knaw I 'm grandfeyther to two galls as moight be tha owern age; tha 'll tell 'ee that old Debs at haaty years 'as warked and niver lost a day as man or boy; has niver coome oopen 'em for n'aporth. An' 'ee 'll keep out o' warkus till he doy. An' 'ee 's put by enow to loy wi' his own feythers in Lanksheer, an' not liggen aloane in parson's choorchyard."

It was part of her uneasiness that, scarcely understanding or, indeed, feeling any interest in these maundering details, she still seemed to have an odd comprehension of his character and some reminiscent knowledge of him, as if she were going through the repetition of some unpleasant dream. Even his wrinkled face was becoming familiar to her. Some weird attraction was holding her; she wanted to get away from it as much as she wanted to analyze it. She glanced ostentatiously at the sky, prepared to open her parasol, and began to edge cautiously away.

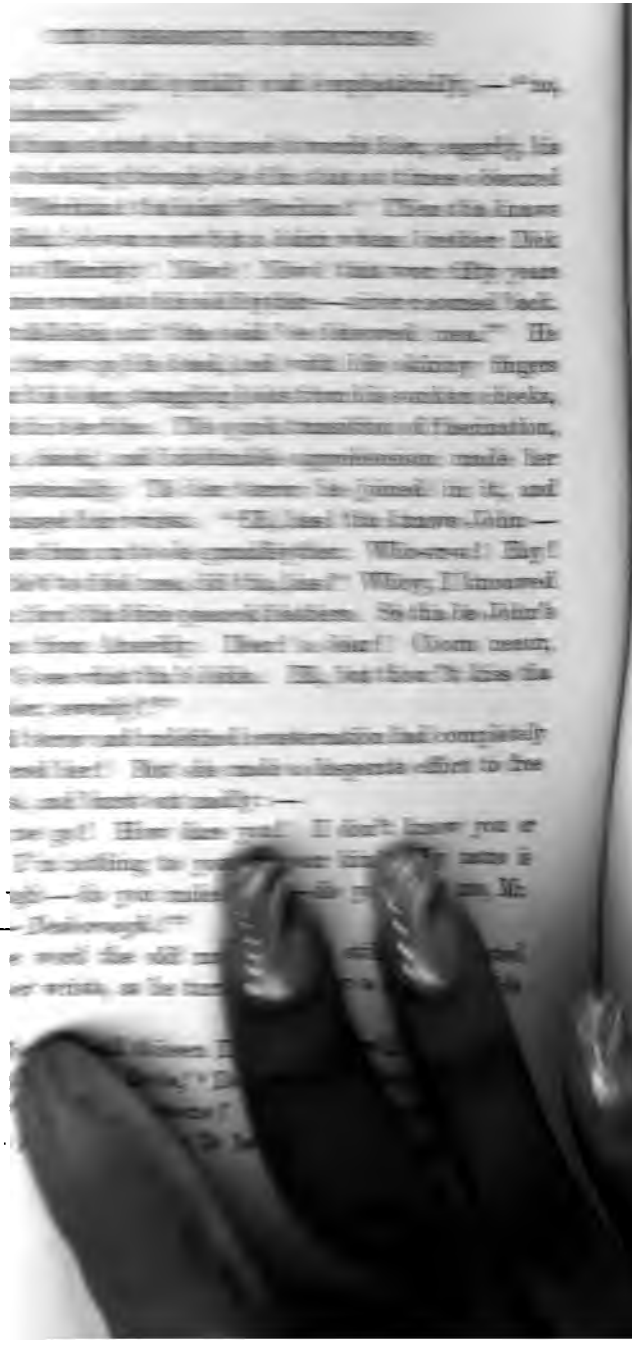
"Then tha beant from these pearts?" he said suddenly.

Dang tha! and look doon on tha kin, and dress thissen in silks o' shame! Tell 'ee thou 'rt an ass, gell! Don't tha hear? An ass! for all tha bean John's bairn! An ass! that 's what tha beast!"

With flashing eyes and burning cheeks she made one more supreme effort, lifting her arms, freeing her wrists, and throwing the old man staggering from her. Then she leaped the stile, turned, and fled through the rain. But before she reached the end of the field she stopped! She had freed herself, — she was stronger than he, — what had she to fear? He was crazy! Yes, he *must* be crazy, and he had insulted her, but he was an old man, — and God knows what! Her heart was beating rapidly, her breath was hurried, but she ran back to the stile.

He was not there. The field sloped away on either side of it. But she could distinguish nothing in the pouring rain above the wind-swept meadow. He must have gone home. Relieved for a moment, she turned and hurried on towards the Priory.

But at every step she was followed, not by the old man's presence, but by what he had said to her, which she could not shake off as she had shaken off his detaining fingers. Was it the ravings of insanity, or had she stumbled unwittingly upon some secret, — was it after all a *secret?* Perhaps it was something they all knew, or would know later. And she had come down here for this. For back of her indignation, back even of her disbelief in his insanity, there was an awful sense of truth! The names he had flung out, of "Debs," "Debban," and "Debbrook," now flashed upon her as something she had seen before, but had not understood. Until she satisfied herself of this, she felt she could not live or breathe! She loathed the Priory, with its austere exclusiveness, as it rose before her; she wished she had never entered it; but it contained that which she must know, and know at once! She entered the nearest door and



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ran up the grand staircase. Her flushed face and disordered appearance were easily accounted for by her exposure to the sudden storm. She went to her bedroom, sent her maid to another room to prepare a change of dress, and, sinking down before her traveling-desk, groped for a document. Ah! there it was — the expensive toy that she had played with! She hastily ran over its leaves to the page she already remembered. And there, among the dashes and perpendicular lines she had jested over last night, on which she had thought was a collateral branch of the line, stood her father's name and that of Richard, his uncle, with the bracketed note in red ink, "see Debbrook, Daybrook, Debbers, and Debs." Yes! this gaunt, half-crazy, overworked peasant, content to rake the dead leaves before the rolling chariots of the Beverdales, was her grandfather; that poorly clad girl in the cottage, and even the menial in the scullery of this very house that might be *hers*, were her *cousins!* She burst into a laugh, and then refolded the document and put it away.

At luncheon she was radiant and sparkling. Her drenched clothes were an excuse for a new and ravishing toilette. She had never looked so beautiful before, and significant glances were exchanged between some of the guests, who believed that the expected proposal had already come. But those who were of the carriage party knew otherwise, and of Lord Algernon's disappointment. Lord Beverdale contented himself with rallying his fair guest on the becomingness of "good works." But he continued, "You 're offering a dreadful example to these ladies, Miss Desborough, and I know I shall never hereafter be able to content them with any frivolous morning amusement at the Priory. For myself, when I am grown gouty and hideous, I know I shall bloom again as a district visitor."

Yet under this surface sparkle and nervous exaltation Sadie never lost consciousness of the gravity of the situa-

tion. If her sense of humor enabled her to see one side of its grim irony; if she experienced a wicked satisfaction in accepting the admiration and easy confidence of the high-born guests, knowing that her cousin had assisted in preparing the meal they were eating, she had never lost sight of the practical effect of the discovery she had made. And she had come to a final resolution. She should leave the Priory at once, and abandon all idea of a matrimonial alliance with its heir! Inconsistent as this might seem to her selfish, worldly nature, it was nevertheless in keeping with a certain pride and independence that was in her blood. She did not love Lord Algernon, neither did she love her grandfather; she was equally willing to sacrifice either or both; she knew that neither Lord Algernon nor his father would make her connections an objection, however they might wish to keep the fact a secret, or otherwise dispose of them by pensions or emigration, but she could not bear to *know it herself!* She never could be happy as the mistress of Scrooby Priory with that knowledge; she did not idealize it as a principle! Carefully weighing it by her own practical common sense, she said to herself that "it would n't pay." The highest independence is often akin to the lowest selfishness; she did not dream that the same pride which kept her grandfather from the workhouse and support by his daughters, and had even kept him from communicating with his own son, now kept her from acknowledging them, even for the gift of a title and domain. There was only one question before her: should she stay long enough to receive the proposal of Lord Algernon, and then decline it? Why should she not snatch that single feminine joy out of the ashes of her burnt-up illusion? She knew that an opportunity would be offered that afternoon. The party were to take tea at Broxby Hall, and Lord Algernon was to drive her there in his dog-cart. Miss Desborough had gone up to her bedroom to put on a

warmer cloak, and had rung twice or thrice impatiently for her maid.

When the girl made her appearance, apologetic, voluble, and excited, Miss Desborough scarcely listened to her excuses, until a single word suddenly arrested her attention. It was "old Debs."

"What *are* you talking about?" said Sadie, pausing in the adjustment of her hat on her brown hair.

"Old Debs, miss, — that's what they call him; an old park-keeper, just found dead in a pool of water in the fields; the grandfather of one of the servants here; and there's such an excitement in the servants' hall. The gentlemen all knew it, too, for I heard Lord Algernon say that he was looking very queer lately, and might have had a fit; and Lord Beverdale has sent word to the coroner. And only think, the people here are such fools that they dare n't touch or move the poor man, and him lyin' there in the rain all the time, until the coroner comes!"

Miss Desborough had been steadily regarding herself in the glass to see if she had turned pale. She had. She set her teeth together until the color partly returned. But she kept her face away from the maid. "That 'll do," she said quietly. "You can tell me all later. I have some important news myself, and I may not go out after all. I want you to take a note for me." She went to her table, wrote a line in pencil, folded it, scribbled an address upon it, handed it to the girl, and gently pushed her from the room.

. . . . . .

The consul was lingering on the terrace beside one of the carriages; at a little distance a groom was holding the nervous thoroughbred of Lord Algernon's dog-cart. Suddenly he felt a touch on his shoulder, and Miss Desborough's maid put a note in his hand. It contained only a line: —

Please come and see me in the library, but without making any fuss about it — at once. S. D.

The consul glanced around him; no one had apparently noticed the incident. He slipped back into the house and made his way to the library. It was a long gallery; at the further end Miss Desborough stood cloaked, veiled, and coquettishly hatted. She was looking very beautiful and animated. "I want you to please do me a great favor," she said, with an adorable smile, "as your own countrywoman, you know, — for the sake of Fourth of July and Pumpkin Pie and the Old Flag! I don't want to go to this circus to-day. I am going to leave here to-night! I am! Honest Injin! I want *you* to manage it. I want you to say that as consul you 've received important news for me: the death of some relative, if you like; or better, something *affecting my property*, you know," with a little satirical laugh. "I guess that would fetch 'em! So go at once."

"But really, Miss Desborough, do let us talk this over before you decide!" implored the bewildered consul. "Think what a disappointment to your host and these ladies. Lord Algernon expects to drive you there; he is already waiting! The party was got up for you!" Miss Desborough made a slight grimace. "I mean you ought to sacrifice something — but I trust there is really nothing serious — to them!"

"If *you* do not speak to them, I will!" said Miss Desborough firmly. "If you say what I tell you, it will come the more plausibly from you. Come! My mind is made up. One of us must break the news! Shall it be you or I?" She drew her cloak over her shoulders and made a step forward.

The consul saw she was determined. "Then wait here till I return, but keep yourself out of sight," he said, and hurried away. Between the library and the terrace he con-

ceived a plan. His perplexity lent him a seriousness which befitted the gravity of the news he had to disclose. "I am sorry to have to tell you," he said, taking Lord Beverdale aside, "that I was the unlucky bearer of some sad news to Miss Desborough this morning, through my consular letters, — some matter concerning the death of a relation of hers, and some wearisome question of property. I thought that it was of little importance, and that she would not take it seriously, but I find I was mistaken. It may even oblige her to catch the London train to-night. I promised to make her excuses to you for the present, and I 'm afraid I must add my own to them, as she wishes me to stay and advise her in this matter, which requires some prompt action."

Miss Desborough was right: the magic word "property" changed the slight annoyance on the earl's face to a sympathetic concern. "Dear me! I trust it is nothing really serious," he said. "Of course you will advise her, and, by the way, if my solicitor, Withers, who 'll be here to-morrow, can do anything, you know, call him in. I hope she 'll be able to see me later. It could not be a *near* relation who died, I fancy; she has no brothers or sisters, I understand."

"A cousin, I think; an old friend," said the consul hastily. He heard Lord Beverdale say a few words to his companions, and saw with a tinge of remorse a cloud settle upon Lord Algernon's fresh face, as he appealed in a whisper to old Lady Mesthyn, who leaned forward from the carriage, and said, "If the dear child thought *I* could be of any service, I should only be too glad to stay with her."

"I know she would appreciate Lady Mesthyn's sympathy," said the ingenious consul quickly, "but I really think the question is more a business one — and" —

"Ah, yes," said the old lady, shaking her head, "it 's dreadful, of course, but we must all think of *that!*"

As the carriage drove away, the consul hurried back a little viciously to his fair countrywoman. "There!" he

said, "I have done it! If I have managed to convey either the idea that you are a penniless orphan, or that I have official information that you are suspected of a dynamite conspiracy, don't blame me! And now," he said, "as I have excused myself on the ground that I must devote myself to this dreadful business of yours, perhaps you 'll tell me *what* it really is."

"Not a word more," said Miss Desborough; "except," she added, — checking her smile with a weary gesture, — "except that I want to leave this dreadful place at once! There! don't ask me any more!"

There could be no doubt of the girl's sincerity. Nor was it the extravagant caprice of a petted idol. What had happened? He might have believed in a lovers' quarrel, but he knew that she and Lord Algernon could have had no private interview that evening. He must perforce accept her silence, yet he could not help saying: —

"You seemed to like the place so much last night. I say, you have n't seen the Priory ghost, have you?"

"The Priory ghost," she said quickly. "What 's that?"

"The old monk who passes through the cloisters with the sacred oil, the bell, and the smell of incense whenever any one is to die here. By Jove! it would have been a good story to tell instead of this cock-and-bull one about your property. And there *was* a death here to-day. You 'd have added the sibyl's gifts to your other charms."

"Tell me about that old man," she said, looking past him out of the window. "I was at his cottage this morning. But, no! first let us go out. You can take me for a walk, if you like. You see I am all ready, and I 'm just stifling here."

They descended to the terrace together. "Where would you like to go?" he asked.

"To the village. I may want to telegraph, you know."

They turned into the avenue, but Miss Desborough stopped.

"Is there not a shorter cut across the fields," she asked, "over there?"

"There is," said the consul.

They both turned into the footpath which led to the farm and stile. After a pause she said, "Did you ever talk with that poor old man?"

"No."

"Then you don't know if he really was crazy, as they think?"

"No. But they may have thought an old man's forgetfulness of present things and his habit of communing with the past was insanity. For all that, he was a plucky, independent old fellow, with a grim purpose that was certainly rational."

"I suppose in his independence he would not have taken favors from these people, or anybody?"

"I should think not."

"Don't you think it was just horrid, — their leaving him alone in the rain, when he might have been only in a fit?"

"The doctor says he died suddenly of heart disease," said the consul. "It might have happened at any moment and without warning."

"Ah, that was the coroner's verdict, then?" said Miss Desborough quickly.

"The coroner did not think it necessary to have any inquest after Lord Beverdale's statement. It would n't have been very joyous for the Priory party. And I dare say he thought it might not be very cheerful for *you*."

"How very kind!" said the young girl, with a quick laugh. "But do you know that it 's about the only thing human, original, and striking that has happened in this place since I 've been here! And so unexpected, considering how comfortably everything is ordered here beforehand."

"Yet you seemed to like that kind of thing very well last evening," said the consul mischievously.

"That was last night," retorted Miss Desborough; "and you know the line, 'Colors seen by candlelight do not look the same by day.' But I'm going to be very consistent to-day, for I intend to go over to that poor man's cottage again, and see if I can be of any service. Will you go with me?"

"Certainly," said the consul, mystified by his companion's extraordinary conduct, yet apparent coolness of purpose, and hoping for some further explanation. Was she only an inexperienced flirt who had found herself on the point of a serious entanglement she had not contemplated? Yet even then he knew she was clever enough to extricate herself in some other way than this abrupt and brutal tearing through the meshes. Or was it possible that she really had any intelligence affecting her property? He reflected that he knew very little of the Desboroughs, but on the other hand he knew that Beverdale knew them much better, and was a prudent man. He had no right to demand her confidence as a reward for his secrecy; he must wait her pleasure. Perhaps she would still explain; women seldom could resist the triumph of telling the secret that puzzled others.

When they reached the village she halted before the low roof of Debs's cottage. "I had better go in first," she said; "you can come in later, and in the mean time you might go to the station for me and find out the exact time that the express train leaves for the north."

"But," said the astonished consul, "I thought you were going to London?"

"No," said Miss Desborough quietly, "I am going to join some friends at Harrogate."

"But that train goes much earlier than the train south, and — and I'm afraid Lord Beverdale will not have returned so soon."

"How sad!" said Miss Desborough, with a faint smile, "but we must bear up under it, and — I'll write him. I will be here until you return."

She turned away and entered the cottage. The granddaughter she had already seen and her sister, the servant at the Priory, were both chatting comfortably, but ceased as she entered, and both rose with awkward respect. There was little to suggest that the body of their grandfather, already in a rough oak shell, was lying upon trestles beside them.

"You have carried out my orders, I see," said Miss Desborough, laying down her parasol.

"Ay, miss; but it was main haard gettin' et döoan so soon, and et cöoast" —

"Never mind the cost. I've given you money enough, I think, and if I have n't, I guess I can give you more."

"Ay, miss! Abbut the pa'son 'ead gi' un a funeral for nowt."

"But I understood you to say," said Miss Desborough, with an impatient flash of eye, "that your grandfather wished to be buried with his kindred in the north?"

"Ay, miss," said the girl apologetically, "an naw 'ees savit th' munny. Abbut 'ee 'd bean tickled 'ad 'ee knowed it! Dear! dear! 'ee niver thowt et 'ud be gi'en by stranger an' not 'es ownt fammaly."

"For all that, you need n't tell anybody it was given by *me*," said Miss Desborough. "And you 'll be sure to be ready to take the train this afternoon — without delay." There was a certain peremptoriness in her voice very unlike Miss Amelyn's, yet apparently much more effective with the granddaughter.

"Ay, miss. Then, if tha 'll excoose mëa, I 'll go streight to 'oory oop sexten."

She bustled away. "Now," said Miss Desborough, turning to the other girl, "I shall take the same train, and will

probably see you on the platform at York to give my final directions. That 's all. Go and see if the gentleman who came with me has returned from the station."

The girl obeyed. Left entirely alone, Miss Desborough glanced around the room, and then went quietly up to the unlidded coffin. The repose of death had softened the hard lines of the old man's mouth and brow into a resemblance she now more than ever understood. She had stood thus only a few years before, looking at the same face in a gorgeously inlaid mahogany casket, smothered amidst costly flowers, and surrounded by friends attired in all the luxurious trappings of woe; yet it was the same face that was now rigidly upturned to the bare thatch and rafters of that crumbling cottage, herself its only companion. She lifted her delicate veil with both hands, and, stooping down, kissed the hard, cold forehead, without a tremor. Then she dropped her veil again over her dry eyes, readjusted it in the little, cheap, black-framed mirror that hung against the wall, and opened the door as the granddaughter returned. The gentleman was just coming from the station.

"Remember to look out for me at York," said Miss Desborough, extending her gloved hand. "Good-by till then." The young girl respectfully touched the ends of Miss Desborough's fingers, dropped a curtsy, and Miss Desborough rejoined the consul.

"You have barely time to return to the Priory and see to your luggage," said the consul, "if you must go. But let me hope that you have changed your mind."

"I have not changed my mind," said Miss Desborough quietly, "and my baggage is already packed." After a pause, she said thoughtfully, "I 've been wondering" —

"What?" said the consul eagerly.

"I 've been wondering if people brought up to speak in a certain dialect, where certain words have their own significance and color, and are part of their own lives and

experience, — if, even when they understand another dialect, they really feel any sympathy with it, or the person who speaks it ? "

" Apropos of " — asked the consul.

" These people I've just left! I don't think I quite felt with them, and I guess they did n't feel with me."

" But," said the consul laughingly, " you know that we Americans speak with a decided dialect of our own, and attach the same occult meaning to it. Yet, upon my word, I think that Lord Beverdale — or shall I say Lord Algernon ? — would not only understand that American word 'guess' as you mean it, but would perfectly sympathize with you."

Miss Desborough's eyes sparkled even through her veil as she glanced at her companion and said, " I *guess not.*"

As the " tea " party had not yet returned, it fell to the consul to accompany Miss Desborough and her maid to the station. But here he was startled to find a collection of villagers upon the platform, gathered round two young women in mourning, and an ominous-looking box. He mingled for a moment with the crowd, and then returned to Miss Desborough's side.

" Really," he said, with a concern that was scarcely assumed, " I ought not to let you go. The omens are most disastrous ! You came here to a death ; you are going away with a funeral ! "

" Then it 's high time I took myself off ! " said the lady lightly.

" Unless, like the ghostly monk, you came here on a mission, and have fulfilled it."

" Perhaps I have. Good-by ! "

. . . . . .

In spite of the bright and characteristic letter which Miss Desborough left for her host, — a letter which mingled her peculiar shrewd sense with her humorous extrava-

gance of expression, — the consul spent a somewhat uneasy evening under the fire of questions that assailed him in reference to the fair deserter. But he kept loyal faith with her, adhering even to the letter of her instructions, and only once was goaded into more active mendacity. The conversation had turned upon "Debs," and the consul had remarked on the singularity of the name. A guest from the north observed, however, that the name was undoubtedly a contraction. "Possibly it might have been 'Debborough,' or even the same name as our fair friend."

"But did n't Miss Desborough tell you last night that she had been hunting up her people, with a family tree, or something like that?" said Lord Algernon eagerly. "I just caught a word here and there, for you were both laughing."

The consul smiled blandly. "You may well say so, for it was all the most delightful piece of pure invention and utter extravagance. It would have amused her still more if she had thought you were listening and took it seriously!"

"Of course! I see!" said the young fellow, with a laugh and a slight rise of color. "I knew she was taking some kind of a rise out of *you*, and that remark reminded me of it."

Nevertheless, within a year, Lord Algernon was happily married to the daughter of a South African millionaire, whose bridal offerings alone touched the sum of half a million. It was also said that the mother was "impossible" and the father "unspeakable," the relations "inextinguishable;" but the wedding was an "occasion," and in the succeeding year of festivity it is presumed that the names of "Debs" and "Desborough" were alike forgotten.

But they existed still in a little hamlet near the edge of a bleak northern moor, where they were singularly exalted on a soaring shaft of pure marble above the submerged and

moss-grown tombstones of a simple country churchyard. So great was the contrast between the modern and pretentious monument and the graves of the humbler forefathers of the village, that even the Americans who chanced to visit it were shocked at what they believed was the ostentatious and vulgar pride of one of their own countrywomen. For on its pedestal was inscribed: —

SACRED TO THE MEMORY
OF
JOHN DEBS DESBOROUGH,
FORMERLY OF THIS PARISH,
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE OCTOBER 20TH, 1892,
AT SCROOBY PRIORY,
AT THE AGE OF EIGHTY-TWO YEARS.
THIS MONUMENT WAS ERECTED AS A LOVING TESTIMONY
BY HIS GRANDDAUGHTER,
SADIE DESBOROUGH, OF NEW YORK, U. S. A.

"AND EVENING BRINGS US HOME."

TWO AMERICANS

PERHAPS if there was anything important in the migration of the Maynard family to Europe it rested solely upon the singular fact that Mr. Maynard did not go there in the expectation of marrying his daughter to a nobleman. A Charleston merchant, whose house represented two honorable generations, had, thirty years ago, a certain self-respect which did not require extraneous aid and foreign support, and it is exceedingly probable that his intention of spending a few years abroad had no ulterior motive than pleasure-seeking and the observation of many things — principally of the past — which his own country did not possess. His future and that of his family lay in his own land, yet with practical common sense he adjusted himself temporarily to his new surroundings. In doing so, he had much to learn of others, and others had something to learn of him; he found that the best people had a high simplicity equal to his own; he corrected their impressions that a Southerner had more or less negro blood in his veins, and that, although a slave owner, he did not necessarily represent an aristocracy. With a distinguishing dialect of which he was not ashamed, a frank familiarity of approach joined to an invincible courtesy of manner, which made even his republican "Sir" equal to the ordinary address to royalty, he was always respected and seldom misunderstood. When he was — it was unfortunate for those who misunderstood him. His type was as distinctive and original as his cousin's, the Englishman, whom it was not the fashion then to imitate. So that, whether in the hotel of a capital, the Kursaal of a Spa, or the humbler pension of a Swiss village, he was

always characteristic. Less so was his wife, who, with the chameleon quality of her transplanted countrywomen, was already Parisian in dress; still less so his daughter, who had by this time absorbed the peculiarities of her French, German, and Italian governesses. Yet neither had yet learned to evade their nationality — or apologize for it.

Mr. Maynard and his family remained for three years in Europe, his stay having been prolonged by political excitement in his own State of South Carolina. Commerce is apt to knock the insularity out of people; distance from one's own distinctive locality gives a wider range to the vision, and the retired merchant foresaw ruin in his State's politics, and from the view-point of all Europe beheld, instead of the usual collection of individual States, his whole country. But the excitement increasing, he was finally impelled to return in a faint hope of doing something to allay it, taking his wife with him, but leaving his daughter at school in Paris. At about this time, however, a single cannon shot fired at the national flag on Fort Sumter shook the whole country, and reverberated even in Europe, sending some earnest hearts back to do battle for State or country, sending others less earnest into inglorious exile, but, saddest of all! knocking over the school bench of a girl at the Paris *pensionnat.* For that shot also sank Maynard's ships at the Charleston wharves, scattered his piled cotton bales awaiting shipment at the quays, and drove him, a ruined man, into the "Home Guard" against his better judgment. Helen Maynard, like a good girl, had implored her father to let her return and share his risks. But the answer was "to wait" until this nine days' madness of an uprising was over. That madness lasted six years, outlived Maynard, whose gray, misdoubting head bit the dust at Ball's Bluff, outlived his colorless widow, and left Nelly a penniless orphan.

Yet enough of her country was left in her to make her courageous and independent of her past. They say that

when she got the news she cried a little, and then laid the letter and what was left of her last monthly allowance in Madame Ablas's lap. Madame was devastated. "But you, impoverished and desolated angel, what of you?" "I shall get some of it back," said the desolated angel with ingenuous candor, "for I speak better French and English than the other girls, and I shall teach *them* until I can get into the Conservatoire, for I have a voice. You yourself have told papa so." From such angelic directness there was no appeal. Madam Ablas had a heart, — more, she had a French manageress's discriminating instinct. The American schoolgirl was installed in a teacher's desk; her bosom friends and fellow students became her pupils. To some of the richest, and they were mainly of her own country, she sold her smartest, latest dresses, jewels, and trinkets at a very good figure, and put the money away against the Conservatoire in the future. She worked hard, she endured patiently everything but commiseration. "I'd have you know, Miss," she said to Miss De Laine, daughter of the famous house of Musslin, De Laine & Co., of New York, "that whatever my position *here* may be, it is not one to be patronized by a tapeseller's daughter. My case is not such a very 'sad one,' thank you, and I prefer not to be spoken of as having seen 'better days' by people who have n't. There! Don't rap your desk with your pencil when you speak to me, or I shall call out 'Cash!' before the whole class." So regrettable an exhibition of temper naturally alienated certain of her compatriots who were unduly sensitive of their origin, and, as they formed a considerable colony who were then reveling in the dregs of the Empire and the last orgies of a tottering court, eventually cost her her place. A republican so aristocratic was not to be tolerated by the true-born Americans who paid court to De Morny for the phosphorescent splendors of St. Cloud and the Tuileries, and Miss Helen lost their favor. But she had already saved enough

money for the Conservatoire and a little attic in a very tall house in a narrow street that trickled into the ceaseless flow of the Rue Lafayette. Here for four years she trotted backwards and forwards regularly to work with the freshness of youth and the inflexible set purpose of maturity. Here, rain or shine, summer or winter, in the mellow season when the large cafés expanded under the white sunshine into an overflow of little tables on the pavement, or when the red glow of the *Brasserie* shone through frosty panes on the turned-up collars of pinched Parisians who hurried by, she was always to be seen.

Half Paris had looked into her clear gray eyes and passed on; a smaller and not very youthful portion of Paris had turned and followed her with small advantage to itself and happily no fear to her. For even in her young womanhood she kept her child's loving knowledge of that great city; she even had an innocent camaraderie with street sweepers, kiosk keepers, and lemonade venders, and the sternness of conciergedom melted before her. In this wholesome, practical child's experience she naturally avoided or overlooked what would not have interested a child, and so kept her freshness and a certain national shrewd simplicity invincible. There is a story told of her girlhood that, one day playing in the Tuileries gardens, she was approached by a gentleman with a waxed mustache and a still more waxen cheek beneath his heavy-lidded eyes. There was an exchange of polite amenities.

"And your name, *ma petite?*"

"Helen," responded the young girl naïvely. "What's yours?"

"Ah," said the kind gentleman, gallantly pulling at his mustache, "if you are Helen, I am Paris."

The young girl raised her clear eyes to his and said gravely, "I reckon your majesty is *France!*"

She retained this childish fearlessness as the poor student

of the Conservatoire; went alone all over Paris with her maiden skirts untarnished by the gilded dust of the boulevards or the filth of by-ways; knew all the best shops for her friends, and the cheapest for her own scant purchases; discovered breakfasts for a few sous with pale sempstresses, whose sadness she understood, and reckless chorus girls, whose gayety she did n't; she knew where the earliest chestnut buds were to be found in the Bois, when the slopes of the Buttes Chaumont were green, and which was the old woman who sold the cheapest flowers before the Madeleine. Alone and independent, she earned the affection of Madam Bibelot, the concierge, and, what was more, her confidence. Her outgoings and incomings were never questioned. The little American could take care of herself. Ah, if her son Jacques were only as reasonable! Miss Maynard might have made more friends had she cared; she might have joined hands with the innocent and light-hearted poverty of the coterie of her own artistic compatriots, but something in her blood made her distrust Bohemianism; her poverty was something to her too sacred for jest or companionship; her own artistic aim was too long and earnest for mere temporary enthusiasms. She might have found friends in her own profession. Her professor opened the sacred doors of his family circle to the young American girl. She appreciated the delicacy, refinement, and cheerful equal responsibilities of that household, so widely different from the accepted Anglo-Saxon belief, but there were certain restrictions that rightly or wrongly galled her American habits of girlish freedom, and she resolutely tripped past the first *étage* four or five flights higher to her attic, the free sky, and independence! Here she sometimes met another kind of independence in Monsieur Alphonse, aged twenty-two, and she who ought to have been Madame Alphonse, aged seventeen, and they often exchanged greetings on the landing with great respect towards each other, and, oddly enough, no con-

fusion or *distrait.* Later they even borrowed each other's matches without fear and without reproach, until one day Monsieur Alphonse's parents took him away, and the desolated *soi-disant* Madame Alphonse, in a cheerful burst of confidence, gave Helen her private opinion of monsieur, and from her seventeen years' experience warned the American infant of twenty against possible similar complications.

One day — it was near the examination for prizes, and her funds were running low — she was obliged to seek one of those humbler restaurants she knew of for her frugal breakfast. But she was not hungry, and after a few mouthfuls left her meal unfinished as a young man entered and half abstractedly took a seat at her table. She had already moved towards the comptoir to pay her few sous, when, chancing to look up in a mirror which hung above the counter, reflecting the interior of the café, she saw the stranger, after casting a hurried glance around him, remove from her plate the broken roll and even the crumbs she had left, and as hurriedly sweep them into his pocket-handkerchief. There was nothing very strange in this; she had seen something like it before in these humbler cafés, — it was a crib for the birds in the Tuileries Gardens, or the poor artist's substitute for rubber in correcting his crayon drawing! But there was a singular flushing of his handsome face in the act that stirred her with a strange pity, made her own cheek hot with sympathy, and compelled her to look at him more attentively. The back that was turned towards her was broad-shouldered and symmetrical, and showed a frame that seemed to require stronger nourishment than the simple coffee and roll he had ordered and was devouring slowly. His clothes, well made though worn, fitted him in a smart, soldier-like way, and accentuated his decided military bearing. The singular use of his left hand in lifting his cup made her uneasy, until a slight movement revealed the fact that his right sleeve was empty and pinned

to his coat. He was one-armed. She turned her compassionate eyes aside, yet lingered to make a few purchases at the counter, as he paid his bill and walked away. But she was surprised to see that he tendered the waiter the unexampled gratuity of a sou. Perhaps he was some eccentric Englishman; he certainly did not look like a Frenchman.

She had quite forgotten the incident, and in the afternoon had strolled with a few fellow pupils into the galleries of the Louvre. It was "copying-day," and as her friends loitered around the easels of the different students with the easy consciousness of being themselves "artists," she strolled on somewhat abstractedly before them. Her own art was too serious to permit her much sympathy with another, and in the chatter of her companions with the young painters a certain levity disturbed her. Suddenly she stopped. She had reached a less frequented room; there was a single easel at one side, but the stool before it was empty, and its late occupant was standing in a recess by the window, with his back towards her. He had drawn a silk handkerchief from his pocket. She recognized his square shoulders, she recognized the handkerchief, and as he unrolled it she recognized the fragments of her morning's breakfast as he began to eat them. It was the one-armed man.

She remained so motionless and breathless that he finished his scant meal without noticing her, and even resumed his place before the easel without being aware of her presence. The noise of approaching feet gave a fresh impulse to her own, and she moved towards him. But he was evidently accustomed to these interruptions, and worked on steadily without turning his head. As the other footsteps passed her she was emboldened to take a position behind him and glance at his work. It was an architectural study of one of Canaletto's palaces. Even her inexperienced eyes were struck with its vigor and fidelity. But she was also conscious of a sense of disappointment. Why was he not

— like the others — copying one of the masterpieces? Becoming at last aware of a motionless woman behind him, he rose, and with a slight gesture of courtesy and a half-hesitating "Vous verrez mieux là, mademoiselle," moved to one side.

"Thank you," said Miss Maynard in English, "but I did not want to disturb you."

He glanced quickly at her face for the first time. "Ah, you are English!" he said.

"No. I am American."

His face lightened. "So am I."

"I thought so," she said.

"From my bad French?"

"No. Because you did not look up to see if the woman you were polite to was old or young."

He smiled. "And you, mademoiselle, — you did not murmur a compliment to the copy over the artist's back."

She smiled, too, — yet with a little pang over the bread. But she was relieved to see that he evidently had not recognized her. "You are modest," she said; "you do not attempt masterpieces."

"Oh, no! The giants like Titian and Corregio must be served with both hands. I have only one," he said half lightly, half sadly.

"But you have been a soldier," she said, with quick intuition.

"Not much. Only during our war, — until I was compelled to handle nothing larger than a palette knife. Then I came home to New York, and, as I was no use there, I came here to study."

"I am from South Carolina," she said quietly, with a rising color.

He put his palette down, and glanced at her black dress. "Yes," she went on doggedly, "my father lost all his property, and was killed in battle with the Northerners. I am

an orphan, — a pupil of the Conservatoire." It was never her custom to allude to her family or her lost fortunes; she knew not why she did it now, but something impelled her to rid her mind of it to him at once. Yet she was pained at his grave and pitying face.

"I am very sorry," he said simply. Then, after a pause, he added, with a gentle smile, "At all events you and I will not quarrel here under the wings of the French eagles that shelter us both."

"I only wanted to explain why I was alone in Paris," she said, a little less aggressively.

He replied by unhooking his palette, which was ingeniously fastened by a strap over his shoulder under the missing arm, and opened a portfolio of sketches at his side. "Perhaps they may interest you more than the copy, which I have attempted only to get at this man's method. They are sketches I have done here."

There was a buttress of Notre Dame, a black arch of the Pont Neuf, part of an old courtyard in the Faubourg St. Germain, — all very fresh and striking. Yet, with the recollection of his poverty in her mind, she could not help saying, "But if you copied one of those masterpieces, you know you could sell it. There is always a demand for that work."

"Yes," he replied, "but these help me in my line, which is architectural study. It is, perhaps, not very ambitious," he added thoughtfully, "but," brightening up again, "I sell these sketches, too. They are quite marketable, I assure you."

Helen's heart sank again. She remembered now to have seen such sketches — she doubted not they were his — in the cheap shops in the Rue Poissonière, ticketed at a few francs each. She was silent as he patiently turned them over. Suddenly she uttered a little cry.

He had just uncovered a little sketch of what seemed at

first sight only a confused cluster of roof tops, dormer windows, and chimneys, level with the sky-line. But it was bathed in the white sunshine of Paris, against the blue sky she knew so well. There, too, were the gritty crystals and rust of the tiles, the red, brown, and greenish mosses of the gutters, and lower down the more vivid colors of geraniums and pansies in flower-pots under the white dimity curtains which hid the small panes of garret windows; yet every sordid detail touched and transfigured with the poetry and romance of youth and genius.

"You have seen this?" she said.

"Yes; it is a study from my window. One must go high for such effects. You would be surprised if you could see how different the air and sunshine" —

"No," she interrupted gently, "I *have* seen it."

"You?" he repeated, gazing at her curiously.

Helen ran the point of her slim finger along the sketch until it reached a tiny dormer window in the left-hand corner, half-hidden by an irregular chimney-stack. The curtains were closely drawn. Keeping her finger upon the spot, she said, interrogatively, "And you saw *that* window?"

"Yes, quite plainly. I remember it was always open, and the room seemed empty from early morning to evening, when the curtains were drawn."

"It is my room," she said simply.

Their eyes met with this sudden confession of their equal poverty. "And mine," he said gayly, "from which this view was taken, is in the rear and still higher up on the other street."

They both laughed as if some singular restraint had been removed; Helen even forgot the incident of the bread in her relief. Then they compared notes of their experiences, of their different concierges, of their housekeeping, of the cheap stores and the cheaper restaurants of Paris, — except

one. She told him her name, and learned that his was Philip, or, if she pleased, Major Ostrander. Suddenly glancing at her companions, who were ostentatiously lingering at a little distance, she became conscious for the first time that she was talking quite confidentially to a very handsome man, and for a brief moment wished, she knew not why, that he had been plainer. This momentary restraint was accented by the entrance of a lady and gentleman, rather *distingué* in dress and bearing, who had stopped before them, and were eyeing equally the artist, his work, and his companion with somewhat insolent curiosity. Helen felt herself stiffening; her companion drew himself up with soldierly rigidity. For a moment it seemed as if, under that banal influence, they would part with ceremonious continental politeness, but suddenly their hands met in a national handshake, and with a frank smile they separated.

Helen rejoined her companions.

"So you have made a conquest of the recently acquired but unknown Greek statue?" said Mademoiselle Renée lightly. "You should take up a subscription to restore his arm, *ma petite*, if there is a modern sculptor who can do it. You might suggest it to the two Russian cognoscenti, who have been hovering around him as if they wanted to buy him as well as his work. Madame La Princesse is rich enough to indulge her artistic taste."

"It is a countryman of mine," said Helen simply.

"He certainly does not speak French," said mademoiselle mischievously.

"Nor think it," responded Helen with equal vivacity. Nevertheless, she wished she had seen him alone.

She thought nothing more of him that day in her finishing exercises. But the next morning, as she went to open her window after dressing, she drew back with a new consciousness, and then, making a peephole in the curtain, looked over the opposite roofs. She had seen them many

times before, but now they had acquired a new picturesqueness, which as her view was, of course, the reverse of the poor painter's sketch, must have been a transfigured memory of her own. Then she glanced curiously along the line of windows level with hers. All these, however, with their occasional revelations of the ménage behind them, were also familiar to her, but now she began to wonder which was his. A singular instinct at last impelled her to lift her eyes. Higher in the corner house, and so near the roof that it scarcely seemed possible for a grown man to stand upright behind it, was an *œil de bœuf* looking down upon the other roofs, and framed in that circular opening like a vignette was the handsome face of Major Ostrander. His eyes seemed to be turned towards her window. Her first impulse was to open it and recognize him with a friendly nod. But an odd mingling of mischief and shyness made her turn away quickly.

Nevertheless, she met him the next morning walking slowly so near her house that their encounter might have been scarcely accidental on his part. She walked with him as far as the Conservatoire. In the light of the open street she thought he looked pale and hollow-cheeked; she wondered if it was from his enforced frugality, and was trying to conceive some elaborate plan of obliging him to accept her hospitality at least for a single meal, when he said: —

"I think you have brought me luck, Miss Maynard."

Helen opened her eyes wonderingly.

"The two Russian connoisseurs who stared at us so rudely were pleased, however, to also stare at my work. They offered me a fabulous sum for one or two of my sketches. It did n't seem to me quite the square thing to old Favel the picture-dealer, whom I had forced to take a lot at one fifteenth the price, so I simply referred them to him."

"No!" said Miss Helen indignantly; "you were not so foolish?"

Ostrander laughed.

"I 'm afraid what you call my folly did n't avail, for they wanted what they saw in my portfolio."

"Of course," said Helen. "Why, that sketch of the housetop alone was worth a hundred times more than what you" — She stopped; she did not like to reveal what he got for his pictures, and added, "more than what any of those usurers would give."

"I am glad you think so well of it, for I do not mean to sell it," he said simply, yet with a significance that kept her silent.

She did not see him again for several days. The preparation for her examination left her no time, and her earnest concentration in her work fully preoccupied her thoughts. She was surprised, but not disturbed, on the day of the awards to see him among the audience of anxious parents and relations. Miss Helen Maynard did not get the first prize, nor yet the second; an *accessit* was her only award. She did not know until afterwards that this had long been a foregone conclusion of her teachers on account of some intrinsic defect in her voice. She did not know until long afterwards that the handsome painter's nervousness on that occasion had attracted even the sympathy of some of those who were near him. For she herself had been calm and collected. No one else knew how crushing was the blow which shattered her hopes and made her three years of labor and privation a useless struggle. Yet though no longer a pupil, she could still teach; her master had found her a small patronage that saved her from destitution. That night she circled up quite cheerfully in her usual swallow flight to her nest under the eaves, and even twittered on the landing a little over the condolences of the concierge, — who knew, *mon Dieu!* what a beast the director of the Conservatoire was and how he could be bribed; but when at last her brown head sank on her pillow she cried — just a little.

[illegible]

[illegible] were both free for that [illegible] advantage of that rare [illegible] make a little suburban ex- [illegible] the Bois, but that was [illegible] There were always [illegible] and he would like for that day [illegible] Versailles? Ah, yes! Versailles!

[illegible] It was not new to either of them. [illegible] an artist and as an American reader of that French historic romance, — a reader who hurried over the sham intrigues of the *Œil de Bœuf*, the sham pastorals of the *Petit Trianon*, and the sham heroics of a shifty court, to get to Lafayette. Helen knew it as a child who had dodged the eclipses from her patriotic father, but had enjoyed the woods, the parks, the terraces, and particularly the restaurant at the park gates. That day they took it

like a boy and girl, — with the amused, omniscient tolerance of youth for a past so inferior to the present. Ostrander thought this gray-eyed, independent American-French girl far superior to the obsequious *filles d'honneur*, whose brocades had rustled through those *quinquonces*, and Helen vaguely realized the truth of her fellow pupil's mischievous criticism of her companion that day at the Louvre. Surely there was no classical statue here comparable to the one-armed soldier-painter!

All this was as yet free from either sentiment or passion, and was only the frank pride of friendship. But, oddly enough, their mere presence and companionship seemed to excite in others that tenderness they had not yet felt themselves. Family groups watched the handsome pair in their innocent confidences, and, with French exuberant recognition of sentiment, thought them the incarnation of Love. Something in their manifest equality of condition kept even the vainest and most susceptible of spectators from attempted rivalry or cynical interruption. And when at last they dropped side by side on a sun-warmed stone bench on the terrace, and Helen, inclining her brown head towards her companion, informed him of the difficulty she had experienced in getting gumbo soup, rice and chicken, corn cakes, or any of her favorite home dishes in Paris, an exhausted but gallant boulevardier rose from a contiguous bench, and, politely lifting his hat to the handsome couple, turned slowly away from what he believed were tender confidences he would not permit himself to hear.

But the shadow of the trees began to lengthen, casting broad bars across the *allée*, and the sun sank lower to the level of their eyes. They were quite surprised, on looking around a few moments later, to discover that the gardens were quite deserted, and Ostrander, on consulting his watch, found that they had just lost a train which the other pleasure-seekers had evidently availed themselves of. No mat

[illegible]

[illegible] — My [illegible] — have [illegible]

[illegible] her fellow pupil's raillery regarding [illegible] towards the painter came [illegible] artificiality to her response.

“I [illegible] you will enjoy it very much,” she said dryly.

“[illegible],” he [illegible] with the frankness that she had lacked. “I'd much rather stay in Paris, but,” he added, with a faint smile, “it's a question of money, and that is not to be despised. Yet I — I — somehow feel that I am deserting you, — leaving you here all alone in Paris.”

“I've been all alone for four years,” she said, with a bitterness she had never felt before, “and I suppose I'm accustomed to it.”

Nevertheless, she leaned a little forward, with her fawn-colored lashes dropped over her eyes, which were bent upon the ground and the point of the parasol she was holding

with her little gloved hands between her knees. He wondered why she did not look up; he did not know that it was partly because there were tears in her eyes, and partly for another reason. As she had leaned forward, his arm had quite unconsciously moved along the back of the bench where her shoulders had rested, and she could not have resumed her position except in his half embrace.

He had not thought of it. He was lost in a greater abstraction. That infinite tenderness, — far above a woman's, — the tenderness of strength and manliness towards weakness and delicacy, the tenderness that looks down and not up, was already possessing him. An instinct of protection drew him nearer this bowed but charming figure, and if he then noticed that the shoulders were pretty, and the curves of the slim waist symmetrical, it was rather with a feeling of timidity and a half-consciousness of unchivalrous thought. Yet why should he not try to keep the brave and honest girl near him always? Why should he not claim the right to protect her? Why should they not — they who were alone in a strange land — join their two lonely lives for mutual help and happiness?

A sudden perception of delicacy, the thought that he should have spoken before her failure at the Conservatoire had made her feel her helplessness, brought a slight color to his cheek. Would it not seem to her that he was taking an unfair advantage of her misfortune? Yet it would be so easy now to slip a loving arm around her waist, while he could work for her and protect her with the other. *The other!* His eye fell on his empty sleeve. Ah, he had forgotten that! He had but *one* arm!

He rose up abruptly, — so abruptly that Helen, rising too, almost touched the arm that was hurriedly withdrawn. Yet in that accidental contact, which sent a vague tremor through the young girl's frame, there was still time for him to have spoken. But he only said: —

"Perhaps we had better dine."

She assented quickly, — she knew not why, — with a feeling of relief. They walked very quietly and slowly towards the restaurant. Not a word of love had been spoken; not even a glance of understanding had passed between them. Yet they both knew by some mysterious instinct that a crisis of their lives had come and gone, and that they never again could be to each other as they were but a brief moment ago. They talked very sensibly and gravely during their frugal meal; the previous spectator of their confidences would have now thought them only simple friends, and have been as mistaken as before. They talked freely of their hopes and prospects, — all save one! They even spoke pleasantly of repeating their little expedition after his return from the country, while in their secret hearts they had both resolved never to see each other again. Yet by that sign each knew that this was love, and were proud of each other's pride which kept it a secret.

The train was late, and it was past ten o'clock when they at last appeared before the concierge of Helen's home. During their journey, and while passing through the crowds at the station and in the streets, Ostrander had exhibited a new and grave guardianship over the young girl, and, on the first landing, after a scrutinizing and an almost fierce glance at one or two of Helen's odd fellow lodgers, he had extended his protection so far as to accompany her up the four flights to the landing of her apartment. Here he took leave of her with a grave courtesy that half pained, half pleased her. She watched his broad shoulders and dangling sleeve as he went down the stairs, and then quickly turned, entered her room, and locked the door. The smile had faded from her lips. Going to the window, she pressed her hot forehead against the cool glass and looked out upon the stars nearly level with the black roofs around her. She stood there some moments until another

star appeared higher up against the roof ridge, the star she was looking for. But here the glass pane before her eyes became presently dim with moisture; she was obliged to rub it out with her handkerchief; yet, somehow, it soon became clouded, at which she turned sharply away and went to bed.

But Miss Helen did not know that when she had looked after the retreating figure of her protector, as he descended the stairs that night, he was really carrying away on those broad shoulders the character she had so laboriously gained during her four years' solitude. For when she came down the next morning the concierge bowed to her with an air of easy, cynical abstraction, the result of a long conversation with his wife the night before. He had taken Helen's part with a kindly cynicism. "Ah! what would you, — it was bound to come. The affair of the Conservatoire had settled that. The poor child could not starve; penniless, she could not marry. Only why consort with other swallows under the eaves when she could have had a gilded cage on the first *étage?*" But girls were so foolish, — in their first affair; then it was always *love!* The second time they were wiser. And this maimed warrior and painter was as poor as she. A compatriot, too; well, perhaps that saved some scandal; one could never know what the Americans were accustomed to do. The first floor, which had been inclined to be civil to the young teacher, was more so, but less respectful; one or two young men were tentatively familiar until they looked in her gray eyes and remembered the broad shoulders of the painter. Oddly enough, only Mademoiselle Fifine, of her own landing, exhibited any sympathy with her, and for the first time Helen was frightened. She did not show it, however, only she changed her lodgings the next day. But before she left she had a few moments' conversation with the concierge and an exchange of a word or two with some of her fellow lodgers.

I have already hinted that the young lady had great precision of statement; she had a pretty turn for handling colloquial French and an incisive knowledge of French character. She left No. 34, Rue de Frivole, working itself into a white rage, but utterly undecided as to her real character.

But all this and much more was presently blown away in the hot breath that swept the boulevards at the outburst of the Franco-German war, and Miss Helen Maynard disappeared from Paris with many of her fellow countrymen. The excitement reached even a quaint old château in Brittany where Major Ostrander was painting. The woman who was standing by his side as he sat before his easel on the broad terrace observed that he looked disturbed.

"What matters?" she said gently. "You have progressed so well in your work that you can finish it elsewhere. I have no great desire to stay in France with a frontier garrisoned by troops while I have a villa in Switzerland where you could still be my guest. Paris can teach you nothing more, my friend; you have only to create now — and be famous."

"I must go to Paris," he said quietly. "I have friends — countrymen — there, who may want me now."

"If you mean the young singer of the Rue de Frivole, you have compromised her already. You can do her no good."

"Madame!"

The pretty face which he had been familiar with for the past six weeks somehow seemed to change its character. Under the mask of dazzling skin he fancied he saw the high cheek-bones and square Tartar angle; the brilliant eyes were even brighter than before, but they showed more of the white than he had ever seen in them.

Nevertheless she smiled, with an equally stony revelation of her white teeth, yet said, still gently, "Forgive me if I

thought our friendship justified me in being frank, — perhaps too frank for my own good."

She stopped as if half expecting an interruption; but as he remained looking wonderingly at her, she bit her lip, and went on: "You have a great career before you. Those who help you must do so without entangling you; a chain of roses may be as impeding as lead. Until you are independent, you — who may in time compass everything yourself — will need to be helped. You know," she added with a smile, "you have but one arm."

"In your kindness and appreciation you have made me forget it," he stammered. Yet he had a swift vision of the little bench at Versailles where he had *not* forgotten it, and as he glanced around the empty terrace where they stood, he was struck with a fateful resemblance to it.

"And I should not remind you now of it," she went on, "except to say that money can always take its place. As in the fairy story, the prince must have a new arm made of gold." She stopped, and then suddenly coming closer to him said, hurriedly and almost fiercely, "Can you not see that I am advising you against my interests, — against myself? Go, then, to Paris, and go quickly, before I change my mind. Only if you do not find your friends there, remember you have always *one* here." Before he could reply, or even understand that white face, she was gone.

He left for Paris that afternoon. He went directly to the Rue de Frivole; his old resolution to avoid Helen was blown to the winds in the prospect of losing her utterly. But the concierge only knew that mademoiselle had left a day or two after monsieur had accompanied her home. And, pointedly, there was another gentleman who had inquired eagerly — and bountifully as far as money went — for any trace of the young lady. It was a *Russe*. The concierge smiled to himself at Ostrander's flushed cheek.

It served this one-armed, conceited American poseur right. Mademoiselle was wiser in this *second* affair.

Ostrander did not finish his picture. The princess sent him a check, which he coldly returned. Nevertheless, he had acquired through his Russian patronage a local fame which stood him well with the picture-dealers, — in spite of the excitement of the war. But his heart was no longer in his work; a fever of unrest seized him, which at another time might have wasted itself in mere dissipation. Some of his fellow artists had already gone into the army. After the first great reverses he offered his one arm and his military experience to that Paris which had given him a home. The old fighting instinct returned to him with a certain desperation he had never known before. In the sorties from Paris the one-armed American became famous, until a few days before the capitulation, when he was struck down by a bullet through the lung, and left in a temporary hospital. Here, in the whirl and terror of Commune days, he was forgotten, and when Paris revived under the republic he had disappeared as completely as his compatriot Helen.

But Miss Helen Maynard had been only obscured, and not extinguished. At the first outbreak of hostilities a few Americans had still kept giddy state among the ruins of the tottering empire. A day or two after she left the Rue de Frivole she was invited by one of her wealthy former schoolmates to assist with her voice and talent at one of their extravagant entertainments. "You will understand, dear," said Miss De Laine, with ingenious delicacy, as she eyed her old comrade's well-worn dress, "that Poppa expects to pay you professional prices, and it may be an opening for you among our other friends."

"I should not come otherwise, dear," said Miss Helen, with equal frankness. But she played and sang very charmingly to the fashionable assembly in the Champs Elysées,

— so charmingly, indeed, that Miss De Laine patronizingly expatiated upon her worth and her better days in confidence to some of the guests.

"A most deserving creature," said Miss De Laine to the dowager duchess of Soho, who was passing through Paris on her way to England; "you would hardly believe that Poppa knew her father when he was one of the richest men in South Carolina."

"Your father seems to have been very fortunate," said the duchess quietly, "and so are *you*. Introduce me."

This not being exactly the reply that Miss De Laine expected, she momentarily hesitated: but the duchess profited by it to walk over to the piano and introduce herself. When she rose to go she invited Helen to luncheon with her the next day. "Come early, my dear, and we 'll have a long talk." Helen pointed out hesitatingly that she was practically a guest of the De Laines. "Ah, well, that 's true, my dear; then you may bring one of them with you."

Helen went to the luncheon, but was unaccompanied. She had a long talk with the dowager. "I am not rich, my dear, like your friends, and cannot afford to pay ten napoleons for a song. Like you, I have seen 'better days.' But this is no place for you, child, and if you can bear with an old woman's company for a while, I think I can find you something to do." That evening Helen left for England with the duchess, a piece of "ingratitude, indelicacy, and shameless snobbery," which Miss De Laine was never weary of dilating upon. "And to think *I* introduced her, though she was a professional!"

. . . . . .

It was three years after. Paris, reviving under the republic, had forgotten Helen and the American colony; and the American colony, emigrating to more congenial courts, had forgotten Paris.

It was a bleak day of English summer when Helen, stand

[illegible] the window of the breakfast-room at Hamley Court, and looking over the wonderful lawn, kept perennially green by [illegible] English skies, heard the practical masculine voice of the duchess in her ear at the same moment that she felt the gentle womanly touch of her hand on her shoulder.

"We are going to luncheon at Moreland Hall to-day, my dear."

"[illegible] we were there only last week!" said Helen.

"Undoubtedly," returned the duchess dryly, "and we may luncheon there next week and the next following. And," she added, looking into her companion's gray eyes, "[illegible] with you to stay there if you choose."

Helen stared at her protector.

"My dear," continued the duchess, slipping her arm around Helen's waist, "Sir James has honored *me* — as became my relations to you — with his confidences. As you have n't given me *yours*, I suppose you have none, and that I am telling you news when I say that Sir James wishes to marry you."

The unmistakable astonishment in the girl's eyes satisfied the duchess even before her voice.

"But he scarcely knows me or anything of me!" said the young girl quickly.

"On the contrary, my dear, he knows *everything* about you. I have been particular in telling him all *I* know — and some things even *you* don't know and could n't tell him. For instance, that you are a very nice person. Come, my dear, don't look so stupefied, or I shall really think there's something in it that I don't know. It's not a laughing nor a crying matter yet; at present it's only luncheon again with a civil man who has three daughters and a place in the county. Don't make the mistake, however, of refusing him before he offers, whatever you do afterwards."

"But" — stammered Helen.

"But — you are going to say that you don't love him and

have never thought of him as a husband," interrupted the duchess; "I read it in your face, — and it 's a very proper thing to say."

"It is so unexpected," urged Helen.

"Everything is unexpected from a man in these matters," said the duchess. "We women are the only ones that are prepared."

"But," persisted Helen, "if I don't want to marry at all?"

"I should say, then, that it is a sign that you ought; if you were eager, my dear, I should certainly dissuade you." She paused, and then drawing Helen closer to her, said, with a certain masculine tenderness, "As long as I live, dear, you know that you have a home here. But I am an old woman living on the smallest of settlements. Death is as inevitable to me as marriage should be to you."

Nevertheless, they did not renew the conversation, and later received the greetings of their host at Moreland Hall with a simplicity and frankness that were, however, perfectly natural and unaffected in both women. Sir James, — a tall, well-preserved man of middle age, with the unmistakable bearing of long years of recognized and unchallenged position, — however, exhibited on this occasion that slight consciousness of weakness and susceptibility to ridicule which is apt to indicate the invasion of the tender passion in the heart of the average Briton. His duty as host towards the elder woman of superior rank, however, covered his embarrassment, and for a moment left Helen quite undisturbed to gaze again upon the treasures of the long drawing-room of Moreland Hall, with which she was already familiar. There were the half-dozen old masters, whose respectability had been as recognized through centuries as their owner's ancestors; there were the ancestors themselves, — wigged, ruffled, and white-handed, by Vandyke, Lely, Romney, and Gainsborough; there were the uniform, expressionless ancestresses

[illegible] [illegible] in all [illegible] gray skies [illegible] seemed to have departed from the [illegible]. The American girl had some- [illegible] might have been the appearance [illegible] with these gaily plumaged [illegible] of environment had at last [illegible]. And a new feeling touched [illegible] her countrywomen, she was strongly [illegible] the thought that all that [illegible] that she might yet stand in [illegible] strange courtiers and stranger shepherd- [illegible] down from the canvas upon the [illegible] her for a moment with a half- [illegible] yielding to what seemed to be her fate. A narrow-eyed, stiff-haired Dutch maid of honor before whom she was standing gazed at her with staring vacancy. Suddenly she started. Before the portrait upon a fanciful easel stood a small, elaborately framed sketch in oils. It was evidently some recently imported treasure. She had not seen it before. As she moved quickly forward, she recognized at a glance that it was Ostrander's sketch from the Paris grenier.

The wall, the room, the park beyond, even the gray sky, seemed to fade away before her. She was standing once more at her attic window looking across the roofs and chimney stacks upward to the blue sky of Paris. Through a gap in the roofs she could see the chestnut-trees trilling in the little square; she could hear the swallows twittering in the leaden troughs of the gutter before her; the call of the chocolate vender or the cry of a gamin floated up to her from the street below, or the latest song of the café chantant was whistled by the blue-bloused workman on the scaffolding hard by. The breath of Paris, of youth, of blended work and play, of ambition, of joyous freedom, again filled her

and mingled with the scent of the mignonette that used to stand on the old window-ledge.

"I am glad you like it. I have only just put it up."

It was the voice of Sir James, — a voice that had regained a little of its naturalness, — a calm, even lazy English voice, — confident from the experience of years of respectful listeners. Yet it somehow jarred upon her nerves with its complacency and its utter incongruousness to her feelings. Nevertheless, the impulse to know more about the sketch was the stronger.

"Do you mean you have just bought it?" asked Helen. "It 's not English?"

"No," said Sir James, gratified with his companion's interest. "I bought it in Paris just after the Commune."

"From the artist?" continued Helen, in a slightly constrained voice.

"No," said Sir James, "although I knew the poor chap well enough. You can easily see that he was once a painter of great promise. I rather think it was stolen from him while he was in hospital by those incendiary wretches. I recognized it, however, and bought for a few francs from them what I would have paid *him* a thousand for."

"In hospital?" repeated Helen dazedly.

"Yes," said Sir James. "The fact is, it was the ending of the usual Bohemian artist's life. Though in this case the man was a real artist, — and I believe, by the way, was a countryman of yours."

"In hospital?" again repeated Helen. "Then he was poor?"

"Reckless, I should rather say; he threw himself into the fighting before Paris and was badly wounded. But it was all the result of the usual love affair, — the girl, they say, ran off with the usual richer man. At all events, it ruined him for painting; he never did anything worth having afterwards."

"And now?" said Helen, in the same unmoved voice.

Sir James shrugged his shoulders. "He disappeared. Probably he'll turn up some day on the London pavement — with chalks. That sketch, by the way, was one that had always attracted me to his studio, though he never would part with it. I rather fancy, don't you know, that the girl had something to do with it. It's a wonderfully realistic sketch, don't you see; and I should n't wonder if it was the girl herself who lived behind one of those queer little windows in the roof there."

"She did live there," said Helen, in a low voice.

Sir James uttered a vague laugh.

Helen looked around her. The duchess had quietly and unostentatiously passed into the library, and in full view, though out of hearing, was examining, with her glass to her eye, some books upon the shelves.

"I mean," said Helen, in a perfectly clear voice, "that the young girl did *not* run away from the painter, and that he had neither the right nor the cause to believe her faithless or attribute his misfortunes to her." She hesitated, not from any sense of her indiscretion, but to recover from a momentary doubt if the girl were really her own self, — but only for a moment.

"Then you knew the painter, as I did?" he said, in astonishment.

"Not as *you* did," responded Helen. She drew nearer the picture, and, pointing a slim finger to the canvas, said: —

"Do you see that small window with the mignonette?"

"Perfectly."

"That was *my* room. His was opposite. He told me so when I first saw the sketch. I am the girl you speak of, for he knew no other, and I believe him to have been a truthful, honorable man."

"But what were you doing there? Surely you are joking?" said Sir James, with a forced smile.

"I was a poor pupil at the Conservatoire, and lived where I could afford to live."

"Alone?"

"Alone."

"And the man was" —

"Major Ostrander was my friend. I even think I have a better right to call him that than you had."

Sir James coughed slightly and grasped the lapel of his coat. "Of course; I dare say; I had no idea of this, don't you know, when I spoke." He looked around him as if to evade a scene. "Ah! suppose we ask the duchess to look at the sketch; I don't think she's seen it." He began to move in the direction of the library.

"She had better wait," said Helen quietly.

"For what?"

"Until" — hesitated Helen smilingly.

"Until? I am afraid I don't understand," said Sir James stiffly, coloring with a slight suspicion.

"Until you have *apologized.*"

"Of course," said Sir James, with a half-hysteric laugh. "I do. You understand I only repeated a story that was told me, and had no idea of connecting *you* with it. I beg your pardon, I'm sure. I er — er — in fact," he added suddenly, the embarrassed smile fading from his face as he looked at her fixedly, "I remember now it must have been the concierge of the house, or the opposite one, who told me. He said it was a Russian who carried off that young girl. Of course it was some made-up story."

"I left Paris with the duchess," said Helen quietly, "before the war."

"Of course. And she knows all about your friendship with this man."

"I don't think she does. I have n't told her. Why should I?" returned Helen, raising her clear eyes to his.

"Really, I don't know," stammered Sir James. "But

[illegible] said Sir James. [illegible] the Duchess [illegible]

[illegible] a fancy to your place, and [illegible]

[illegible] the Duchess turned to Helen. [illegible] don't mind me, for I [illegible] my confidence less gallantly [illegible] did you refuse him?"

[illegible] said Helen. "I only prevented [illegible]"

[illegible]

Then Helen told her all, — everything except her first

meeting with Ostrander at the restaurant. A true woman respects the pride of those she loves more even than her own, and while Helen felt that although that incident might somewhat condone her subsequent romantic passion in the duchess's eyes, she could not tell it.

The duchess listened in silence.

"Then you two incompetents have never seen each other since?" she asked.

"No."

"But you hope to?"

"I cannot speak for *him*," said Helen.

"And you have never written to him, and don't know whether he is alive or dead?"

"No."

"Then I have been nursing in my bosom for three years at one and the same time a brave, independent, matter-of-fact young person and the most idiotic, sentimental heroine that ever figured in a romantic opera or a country ballad." Helen did not reply. "Well, my dear," said the duchess, after a pause, "I see that you are condemned to pass your days with me in some cheap hotel on the continent." Helen looked up wonderingly. "Yes," she continued, "I suppose I must now make up my mind to sell my place to this gilded South American, who has taken a fancy to it. But I am not going to spoil my day by seeing him *now*. No; we will excuse ourselves from going to Deep Hill to-day, and we will go back home quietly after luncheon. It will be a mercy to Sir James."

"But," said Helen earnestly, "I can go back to my old life, and earn my own living."

"Not if I can help it," said the duchess grimly. "Your independence has made you a charming companion to me, I admit; but I shall see that it does not again spoil your chances of marrying. Here comes Sir James. Really, my dear, I don't know which one of you looks the more relieved."

[illegible]

[illegible] for an interview with the stranger, [illegible] was inclined to regard as a [illegible]. She knew her friend's straitened circumstances, which might make such a sacrifice necessary to secure a competency for her old age, and, as Helen feared also, a provision for herself. She knew the strange tenderness of this masculine woman, which had survived a husband's infidelities and a son's forgetfulness, to be given to her, and her heart sank at the prospect of separation, even while her pride demanded that she should return to her old life again. Then she wondered if the duchess was right; did she still cherish the hope of meeting Odrander again? The tears she had kept back all that day asserted themselves as she flung open the library

door and ran across the garden into the myrtle walk. "In hospital!" The words had been ringing in her ears through Sir James's complacent speech, through the oddly constrained luncheon, through the half-tender, half-masculine reasoning of her companion. He *had* loved her; he had suffered and perhaps thought her false. Suddenly she stopped. At the further end of the walk the ominous stranger whom she wished to avoid was standing looking towards the house.

How provoking! She glanced again; he was leaning against a tree, and was obviously as preoccupied as she was herself. He was actually sketching the ivy-covered gable of the library. What presumption! And he was sketching with his left hand. A sudden thrill of superstition came over her. She moved eagerly forward for a better view of him. No! he had two arms!

But his quick eye had already caught sight of her, and before she could retreat she could see that he had thrown away his sketch-book and was hastening eagerly toward her. Amazed and confounded she would have flown, but her limbs suddenly refused their office; and as he at last came near her with the cry of "Helen!" upon his lips, she felt herself staggering, and was caught in his arms.

"Thank God," he said. "Then she *has* let you come to me!"

She disengaged herself slowly and dazedly from him, and stood looking at him with wondering eyes. He was bronzed and worn; there was the second arm: but still it was *he*. And with the love, which she now knew he had felt, looking from his honest eyes!

"*She* has let me come!" she repeated vacantly. "Whom do you mean?"

"The duchess."

"The duchess?"

"Yes." He stopped suddenly, gazing at her blank face,

while his own grew ashy white. "Helen! For God's sake tell me! You have not accepted him?"

"I have accepted no one," she stammered, with a faint color rising to her cheeks. "I do not understand you."

A look of relief came over him. "But," he said amazedly, "has not the duchess told you how I happen to be here? How, when you disappeared from Paris long ago, with my ambition crushed, and nothing left to me but my old trade of the fighter, I joined a secret expedition to help the Chilian revolutionists? How I, who might have starved as a painter, gained distinction as a partisan general, and was rewarded with an envoyship in Europe? How I came to Paris to seek you? How I found that even the picture — your picture, Helen — had been sold? How, in tracing it here, I met the duchess at Deep Hill, and learning you were with her, in a moment of impulse, told her my whole story? How she told me that though she was your best friend, you had never spoken of me, and how she begged me not to spoil your chance of a good match by revealing myself, and so awakening a past — which she believed you had forgotten? How she implored me at least to let her make a fair test of your affections and your memory, and until then to keep away from you — and to spare you, Helen; and for your sake, I consented? Surely she has told this, *now!*"

"Not a word," said Helen blankly.

"Then you mean to say that if I had not haunted the park to-day, in the hope of seeing you, believing that as you would not recognize me with this artificial arm, I should not break my promise to her, — you would not have known I was even living."

"No! — yes! — stay!" A smile broke over her pale face and left it rosy. "I see it all now. Oh, Philip, don't you understand? She wanted only to try us!"

There was a silence in the lonely wood, broken only

by the trills of a frightened bird whose retreat was invaded.

"Not now! Please! Wait! Come with me!"

The next moment she had seized Philip's left hand, and, dragging him with her, was flying down the walk towards the house. But as they neared the garden door it suddenly opened on the duchess, with her glasses to her eyes, smiling.

The General Don Felipe Ostrander did not buy Hamley Court, but he and his wife were always welcome guests there. And Sir James, as became an English gentleman, — amazed though he was at Philip's singular return, and more singular incognito, — afterwards gallantly presented Philip's wife with Philip's first picture.

THE STRANGE EXPERIENCE OF ALKALI DICK

He was a "cowboy." A reckless and dashing rider, yet mindful of his horse's needs; good-humored by nature, but quick in quarrel; independent of circumstance, yet shy and sensitive of opinion; abstemious by education and general habit, yet intemperate in amusement; self-centred, yet possessed of a childish vanity, — taken altogether, a characteristic product of the Western plains, which he never should have left.

But reckless adventure after adventure had brought him into difficulties, from which there was only one equally adventurous escape: he joined a company of Indians engaged by Buffalo Bill to simulate before civilized communities the sports and customs of the uncivilized. In divers Christian arenas of the nineteenth century he rode as a northern barbarian of the first might have disported before the Roman populace, but harmlessly, of his own free will, and of some little profit to himself. He threw his lasso under the curious eyes of languid men and women of the world, eager for some new sensation, with admiring plaudits from them and a half-contemptuous egotism of his own. But outside of the arena he was lonely, lost, and impatient for excitement.

An ingenious attempt to "paint the town red" did not commend itself as a spectacle to the householders who lived in the vicinity of Earl's Court, London, and Alkali Dick was haled before a respectable magistrate by a serious policeman, and fined as if he had been only a drunken coster. A later attempt at Paris to "incarnadine" the neighborhood of the Champs de Mars, and "round up" a number

of boulevardiers, met with a more disastrous result, — the gleam of steel from mounted gendarmes, and a mandate to his employers.

So it came that one night, after the conclusion of the performance, Alkali Dick rode out of the corral gate of the Hippodrome with his last week's salary in his pocket and an imprecation on his lips. He had shaken the sawdust of the sham arena from his high, tight-fitting boots; he would shake off the white dust of France, and the effeminate soil of all Europe also, and embark at once for his own country and the Far West!

A more practical and experienced man would have sold his horse at the nearest market and taken train to Havre, but Alkali Dick felt himself incomplete on *terra firma* without his mustang, — it would be hard enough to part from it on embarking, — and he had determined to ride to the seaport.

The spectacle of a lithe horseman, clad in a Rembrandt sombrero, velvet jacket, turnover collar, almost Van Dyke in its proportions, white trousers and high boots, with long curling hair falling over his shoulders, and a pointed beard and mustache, was a picturesque one, but still not a novelty to the late-supping Parisians who looked up under the midnight gas as he passed, and only recognized one of those men whom Paris had agreed to designate as "Booflo-bils," going home.

At three o'clock he pulled up at a wayside cabaret, preferring it to the publicity of a larger hotel, and lay there till morning. The slight consternation of the cabaret-keeper and his wife over this long-haired phantom, with glittering, deep-set eyes, was soothed by a royally-flung gold coin, and a few words of French slang picked up in the arena, which, with the name of Havre, comprised Dick's whole knowledge of the language. But he was touched with their ready and intelligent comprehension of his needs.

and their genial if not so comprehensive loquacity. Luckily for his quick temper, he did not know that they had taken him for a traveling quack-doctor going to the Fair of Yvetot, and that madame had been on the point of asking him for a magic balsam to prevent migraine.

He was up betimes and away, giving a wide berth to the larger towns; taking byways and cut-offs, yet always with the Western pathfinder's instinct, even among these alien, poplar-haunted plains, low-banked, willow-fringed rivers, and cloverless meadows. The white sun shining everywhere, — on dazzling arbors, summer-houses, and trellises; on light green vines and delicate pea-rows; on the white trousers, jackets, and shoes of smart shopkeepers or holiday makers; on the white headdresses of nurses and the white-winged caps of the Sisters of St. Vincent, — all this grew monotonous to this native of still more monotonous wastes. The long, black shadows of short, blue-skirted, sabotted women and short, blue-bloused, sabotted men slowly working in the fields, with slow oxen, or still slower heavy Norman horses; the same horses gayly bedecked, dragging slowly not only heavy wagons, but their own apparently more monstrous weight over the white road, fretted his nervous Western energy, and made him impatient to get on.

At the close of the second day he found some relief on entering a trackless wood, — not the usual formal avenue of equidistant trees, leading to nowhere, and stopping upon the open field, — but apparently a genuine forest as wild as one of his own "oak bottoms." Gnarled roots and twisted branches flung themselves across his path; his mustang's hoofs sank in deep pits of moss and last year's withered leaves; trailing vines caught his heavy-stirruped feet, or brushed his broad sombrero; the vista before him seemed only to endlessly repeat the same sylvan glade; he was in fancy once more in the primeval Western forest, and encompassed by its vast, dim silences. He did not know that he

had in fact only penetrated an ancient park which in former days resounded to the winding fanfare of the chase, and was still, on stated occasions, swept over by accurately green-coated Parisians and green-plumed Dianes, who had come down by train! To him it meant only unfettered and unlimited freedom.

He rose in his stirrups, and sent a characteristic yell ringing down the dim aisles before him. But, alas! at the same moment, his mustang, accustomed to the firmer grip of the prairie, in lashing out, stepped upon a slimy root, and fell heavily, rolling over his clinging and still unlodged rider. For a few moments both lay still. Then Dick extricated himself with an oath, rose giddily, dragged up his horse, — who, after the fashion of his race, was meekly succumbing to his reclining position, — and then became aware that the unfortunate beast was badly sprained in the shoulder, and temporarily lame. The sudden recollection that he was some miles from the road, and that the sun was sinking, concentrated his scattered faculties. The prospect of sleeping out in that summer woodland was nothing to the pioneer-bred Dick; he could make his horse and himself comfortable anywhere, — but he was delaying his arrival at Havre. He must regain the high-road, — or some wayside inn. He glanced around him; the westering sun was a guide for his general direction; the road must follow it north or south; he would find a "clearing" somewhere. But here Dick was mistaken; there seemed no interruption of, no encroachment upon, this sylvan tract, as in his Western woods. There was no track or trail to be found; he missed even the ordinary woodland signs that denoted the path of animals to water. For the park, from the time a northern duke had first alienated it from the virgin forest, had been rigidly preserved.

Suddenly, rising apparently from the ground before him, he saw the high roof-ridges and *tourelles* of a long, irregu-

lar gloomy building. A few steps further showed him that it lay in a cupolike depression of the forest, and that it was still a long descent from where he had wandered to where it stood in the gathering darkness. His mustang was moving with great difficulty; he uncoiled his lariat from the saddle-horn and, selecting the most open space, tied one end to the trunk of a large tree, — the forty feet of horsehair rope giving the animal a sufficient degree of grazing freedom.

Then he strode more quickly down the forest side towards the building, which now revealed its austere proportions, though Dick could see that they were mitigated by a strange, formal flower garden, with quaint statues and fountains. There were grim black *allées* of clipped trees, a curiously wrought iron gate, and twisted iron espaliers. On one side the edifice was supported by a great stone terrace, which seemed to him as broad as a Parisian boulevard. Yet everywhere it appeared sleeping in the desertion and silence of the summer twilight. The evening breeze swayed the lace curtains at the tall windows, but nothing else moved. To the unsophisticated Western man it looked like a scene on the stage.

His progress was, however, presently checked by the first sight of preservation he had met in the forest, — a thick hedge, which interfered between him and a sloping lawn beyond. It was up to his waist, yet he began to break his way through it, when suddenly he was arrested by the sound of voices. Before him, on the lawn, a man and woman, evidently servants, were slowly advancing, peering into the shadows of the wood which he had just left. He could not understand what they were saying, but he was about to speak and indicate by signs his desire to find the road when the woman, turning towards her companion, caught sight of his face and shoulders above the hedge. To his surprise and consternation, he saw the color drop out of her fresh

cheeks, her round eyes fix in their sockets, and with a despairing shriek she turned and fled towards the house. The man turned at his companion's cry, gave the same horrified glance at Dick's face, uttered a hoarse "Sacré!" crossed himself violently, and fled also.

Amazed, indignant, and for the first time in his life humiliated, Dick gazed speechlessly after them. The man, of course, was a sneaking coward; but the woman was rather pretty. It had not been Dick's experience to have women run *from* him! Should he follow them, knock the silly fellow's head against a tree, and demand an explanation? Alas, he knew not the language! They had already reached the house and disappeared in one of the offices. Well! let them go — for a mean "low-down" pair of country bumpkins! — *he* wanted no favors from them!

He turned back angrily into the forest to seek his unlucky beast. The gurgle of water fell on his ear; hard by was a spring, where at least he could water the mustang. He stooped to examine it; there was yet light enough in the sunset sky to throw back from that little mirror the reflection of his thin, oval face, his long, curling hair, and his pointed beard and mustache. Yes! this was his face, — the face that many women in Paris had agreed was romantic and picturesque. Had those wretched greenhorns never seen a real man before? Were they idiots, or insane? A sudden recollection of the silence and seclusion of the building suggested certainly an asylum, — but where were the keepers?

It was getting darker in the wood; he made haste to recover his horse, to drag it to the spring, and there bathe its shoulder in the water mixed with whiskey taken from his flask. His saddle-bag contained enough bread and meat for his own supper; he would camp for the night where he was, and with the first light of dawn make his way back through the wood whence he came. As the light slowly

faded from the wood, he rolled himself in his saddle-blanket and lay down.

But not to sleep. His strange position, the accident to his horse, an unusual irritation over the incident of the frightened servants, — trivial as it might have been to any other man. — and, above all, an increasing childish curiosity, kept him awake and restless. Presently he could see also that it was growing lighter beyond the edge of the wood, and that the rays of a young crescent moon, while plunging the forest into darkness and impassable shadow, evidently were illuminating the hollow below. He threw aside his blanket, and made his way to the hedge again. He was right; he could see the quaint, formal lines of the old garden more distinctly, — the broad terrace, the queer, dark bulk of the house, with lights now gleaming from a few of its open windows.

Before one of these windows opening on the terrace was a small, white, draped table with fruits, cups, and glasses, and two or three chairs. As he gazed curiously at these new signs of life and occupation, he became aware of a regular and monotonous tap upon the stone flags of the terrace. Suddenly he saw three figures slowly turn the corner of the terrace at the further end of the building, and walk towards the table. The central figure was that of an elderly woman, yet tall and stately of carriage, walking with a stick, whose regular tap he had heard, supported on the one side by an elderly curé in black *soutaine*, and on the other by a tall and slender girl in white.

They walked leisurely to the other end of the terrace, as if performing a regular exercise, and returned, stopping before the open French window; where, after remaining in conversation a few moments, the elderly lady and her ecclesiastical companion entered. The young girl sauntered slowly to the steps of the terrace, and, leaning against a huge vase as she looked over the garden, seemed lost in

contemplation. Her face was turned towards the wood, but in quite another direction from where he stood.

There was something so gentle, refined, and graceful in her figure, yet dominated by a girlish youthfulness of movement and gesture, that Alkali Dick was singularly interested. He had probably never seen an *ingénue* before; he had certainly never come in contact with a girl of that caste and seclusion in his brief Parisian experience. He was sorely tempted to leave his hedge and try to obtain a nearer view of her. There was a fringe of lilac bushes running from the garden up the slope; if he could gain their shadows, he could descend into the garden. What he should do after his arrival, he had not thought; but he had one idea — he knew not why — that if he ventured to speak to her he would not be met with the abrupt rustic terror he had experienced at the hands of the servants. *She* was not of that kind! He crept through the hedge, reached the lilacs, and began the descent softly and securely in the shadow. But at the same moment she arose, called in a youthful voice towards the open window, and began to descend the steps. A half-expostulating reply came from the window, but the young girl answered it with the laughing, capricious confidence of a spoiled child, and continued her way into the garden. Here she paused a moment and hung over a rose-tree, from which she gathered a flower, afterwards thrust into her belt. Dick paused, too, half crouching, half leaning over a lichen-stained, cracked stone pedestal from which the statue had long been overthrown and forgotten.

To his surprise, however, the young girl, following the path to the lilacs, began leisurely to ascend the hill, swaying from side to side with a youthful movement, and swinging the long stalk of a lily at her side. In another moment he would be discovered! Dick was frightened; his confidence of the moment before had all gone; he would fly, — and yet, an exquisite and fearful joy kept him motionless.

She was approaching him, full and clear in the moonlight. He could see the grace of her delicate figure in the simple white frock drawn at the waist with broad satin ribbon, and its love-knots of pale blue ribbons on her shoulders; he could see the coils of her brown hair, the pale, olive tint of her oval cheek, the delicate, swelling nostril of her straight, clear-cut nose; he could even smell the lily she carried in her little hand. Then, suddenly, she lifted her long lashes, and her large gray eyes met his.

Alas! the same look of vacant horror came into her eyes, and fixed and dilated their clear pupils. But she uttered no outcry, — there was something in her blood that checked it; something that even gave a dignity to her recoiling figure, and made Dick flush with admiration. She put her hand to her side, as if the shock of the exertion of her ascent had set her heart to beating, but she did not faint. Then her fixed look gave way to one of infinite sadness, pity, and pathetic appeal. Her lips were parted; they seemed to be moving, apparently in prayer. At last her voice came, wonderingly, timidly, tenderly: "Mon Dieu! c'est donc vous? Ici? C'est vous que Marie a crue voir! Que venez-vous faire ici, Armand de Fontonelles? Répondez!"

Alas, not a word was comprehensible to Dick; nor could he think of a word to say in reply. He made an uncouth, half-irritated, half-despairing gesture towards the wood he had quitted, as if to indicate his helpless horse, but he knew it was meaningless to the frightened yet exalted girl before him. Her little hand crept to her breast and clutched a rosary within the folds of her dress, as her soft voice again arose, low but appealingly: —

"Vous souffrez! Ah, mon Dieu! Peut-on vous secourir? Moi-même — mes prières pourraient elles intercéder pour vous? Je supplierai le ciel de prendre en pitié l'âme de mon ancêtre. Monsieur le curé est là, — je lui parlerai. Lui et ma mère vous viendront en aide."

She clasped her hands appealingly before him.

Dick stood bewildered, hopeless, mystified; he had not understood a word; he could not say a word. For an instant he had a wild idea of seizing her hand and leading her to his helpless horse, and then came what he believed was his salvation, — a sudden flash of recollection that he had seen the word he wanted, the one word that would explain all, in a placarded notice at the Cirque of a bracelet that had been *lost*, — yes, the single word "perdu." He made a step towards her, and in a voice almost as faint as her own stammered, "Perdu!"

With a little cry, that was more like a sigh than an outcry, the girl's arms fell to her side; she took a step backwards, reeled, and fainted away.

Dick caught her as she fell. What had he said! — but, more than all, what should he do now? He could not leave her alone and helpless, — yet how could he justify another disconcerting intrusion? He touched her hands; they were cold and lifeless; her eyes were half closed; her face as pale and drooping as her lily. Well, he must brave the worst now, and carry her to the house, even at the risk of meeting the others and terrifying them as he had her. He caught her up, — he scarcely felt her weight against his breast and shoulder, — and ran hurriedly down the slope to the terrace, which was still deserted. If he had time to place her on some bench beside the window within their reach, he might still fly undiscovered! But as he panted up the steps of the terrace with his burden, he saw that the French window was still open, but the light seemed to have been extinguished. It would be safer for her if he could place her *inside* the house, — if he but dared to enter. He was desperate, — and he dared!

He found himself alone, in a long salon of rich but faded white and gold hangings, lit at the further end by two tall candles on either side of the high marble mantel, whose

rays, however, scarcely reached the window where he had entered. He laid his burden on a high-backed sofa. In so doing, the rose fell from her belt. He picked it up, put it in his breast, and turned to go. But he was arrested by a voice from the terrace: —

"Renée!"

It was the voice of the elderly lady, who, with the curé at her side, had just appeared from the rear of the house, and from the further end of the terrace was looking towards the garden in search of the young girl. His escape in that way was cut off. To add to his dismay, the young girl, perhaps roused by her mother's voice, was beginning to show signs of recovering consciousness. Dick looked quickly around him. There was an open door, opposite the window, leading to a hall which, no doubt, offered some exit on the other side of the house. It was his only remaining chance! He darted through it, closed it behind him, and found himself at the end of a long hall or picture gallery, strangely illuminated through high windows, reaching nearly to the roof, by the moon, which on that side of the building threw nearly level bars of light and shadows across the floor and the quaint portraits on the wall.

But to his delight he could see at the other end a narrow, lance-shaped open postern door showing the moonlit pavement without, — evidently the door through which the mother and the curé had just passed out. He ran rapidly towards it. As he did so he heard the hurried ringing of bells and voices in the room he had quitted, — the young girl had evidently been discovered, — and this would give him time. He had nearly reached the door, when he stopped suddenly — his blood chilled with awe! It was his turn to be terrified — he was standing, apparently, before *himself!*

His first recovering thought was that it was a mirror, so accurately was every line and detail of his face and figure

reflected. But a second scrutiny showed some discrepancies of costume, and he saw it was a paneled portrait on the wall. It was of a man of his own age, height, beard, complexion, and features, with long curls like his own, falling over a lace Van Dyke collar, which, however, again simulated the appearance of his own hunting-shirt. The broad-brimmed hat in the picture, whose drooping plume was lost in shadow, was scarcely different from Dick's sombrero. But the likeness of the face to Dick was marvelous — convincing! As he gazed at it, the wicked black eyes seemed to flash and kindle at his own, — its lip curled with Dick's own sardonic humor!

He was recalled to himself by a step in the gallery. It was the curé, who had entered hastily, evidently in search of one of the servants. Partly because it was a man and not a woman, partly from a feeling of bravado, and partly from a strange sense, excited by the picture, that he had some claim to be there, he turned and faced the pale priest with a slight dash of impatient devilry that would have done credit to the portrait. But he was sorry for it the next moment!

The priest, looking up suddenly, discovered what seemed to him to be the portrait standing before its own frame and glaring at him. Throwing up his hands with an averted head and an "Exorcis — !" he wheeled and scuffled away. Dick seized the opportunity, darted through the narrow door on to the rear terrace, and ran, under cover of the shadow of the house, to the steps into the garden. Luckily for him, this new and unexpected diversion occupied the inmates too much with what was going on in the house to give them time to search outside. Dick reached the lilac hedge, tore up the hill, and in a few moments threw himself, panting, on his blanket. In the single look he had cast behind, he had seen that the half-dark salon was now brilliantly lighted, — where no doubt the whole

terrified household was now assembled. He had no fear of being followed; since his confrontation with his own likeness in the mysterious portrait, he understood everything. The apparently supernatural character of his visitation was made plain; his ruffled vanity was soothed — his vindication was complete. He laughed to himself and rolled about, until in his suppressed merriment the rose fell from his bosom, and — he stopped! Its freshness and fragrance recalled the innocent young girl he had frightened. He remembered her gentle, pleading voice, and his cheek flushed. Well, he had done the best he could in bringing her back to the house, — at the risk of being taken for a burglar, — and she was safe now! If that stupid French parson did n't know the difference between a living man and a dead and painted one, it was n't his fault. But he fell asleep with the rose in his fingers.

He was awake at the first streak of dawn. He again bathed his horse's shoulder, and saddled but did not mount him, as the beast, although better, was still stiff, and Dick wished to spare him for the journey to still distant Havre, although he had determined to lie over that night at the first wayside inn. Luckily for him, the disturbance at the château had not extended to the forest, for Dick had to lead his horse slowly and could not have escaped; but no suspicion of external intrusion seemed to have been awakened, and the woodland was evidently seldom invaded.

By dint of laying his course by the sun and the exercise of a little woodcraft, in the course of two hours he heard the creaking of a hay cart, and knew that he was near a traveled road. But to his discomfiture he presently came to a high wall, which had evidently guarded this portion of the woods from the public. Time, however, had made frequent breaches in the stones; these had been roughly filled in with a rude abatis of logs and tree-tops pointing towards the road. But as these were mainly designed to

prevent intrusion into the park rather than egress from it, Dick had no difficulty in rolling them aside and emerging at last with his limping steed upon the white high-road. The creaking cart had passed; it was yet early for traffic, and Dick presently came upon a wine-shop, a bakery, a blacksmith's shop, laundry, and a somewhat pretentious café and hotel in a broader space which marked the junction of another road.

Directly before it, however, to his consternation, were the massive but timeworn iron gates of a park, which Dick did not doubt was the one in which he had spent the previous night. But it was impossible to go further in his present plight, and he boldly approached the restaurant. As he was preparing to make his usual explanatory signs, to his great delight he was addressed in a quaint, broken English, mixed with forgotten American slang, by the white-trousered, black-alpaca coated proprietor. More than that — he was a Social Democrat and an enthusiastic lover of America — had he not been to "Bos-town" and New York, and penetrated as far west as "Booflo," and had much pleasure in that beautiful and free country? Yes! it was a "go-a-'ed" country — you "bet your lif'." One had reason to say so: there was your electricity — your street cars — your "steambots" — ah! such steambots — ah! and your "r-rail-r-roads." Ah! observe! compare your r-rail-r-roads and the buffet of the Pullman with the line from Paris, for example — and where is one? Nowhere! Actually, positively, without doubt, nowhere!

Later, at an appetizing breakfast, — at which, to Dick's great satisfaction, the good man had permitted and congratulated himself to sit at table with a free-born American, — he was even more loquacious. For what then, he would ask, was this incompetence, this imbecility, of France? He would tell. It was the vile corruption of Paris, the grasping of capital and companies, the fatal influence of the

still clinging noblesse, and the insidious Jesuitical power of the priests. As for example, Monsieur the "Booflo-bil" had doubtless noticed the great gates of the park before the café? It was the preserve, — the hunting-park of one of the old grand seigneurs, still kept up by his descendants, the Comtes de Fontonelles, — hundreds of acres that had never been tilled, and kept as wild waste wilderness, — kept for a day's pleasure in a year! And, look you! the peasants starving around its walls in their small garden patches and pinched farms! And the present Comte de Fontonelles cascading gold on his mistresses in Paris; and the Comtesse, his mother, and her daughter living there to feed and fatten and pension a brood of plotting, black-cowled priests. Ah, bah! where was your Republican France, then? But a time would come. The "Booflo-bil" had, without doubt, noticed, as he came along the road, the breaches in the wall of the park?

Dick, with a slight dry reserve, "reckoned that he had."

"They were made by the scythes and pitchforks of the peasants in the Revolution of '93, when the count was *émigré*, as one says with reason 'skedadelle,' to England. Let them look the next time that they burn not the château, — 'bet your lif'!'"

"The château," said Dick, with affected carelessness. "Wot's the blamed thing like?"

It was an old affair, — with armor and a picture gallery, — and bricabrac. He had never seen it. Not even as a boy, — it was kept very secluded then. As a man — you understand — he could not ask the favor. The Comtes de Fontonelles and himself were not friends. The family did not like a café near their sacred gates, — where had stood only the huts of their retainers. The American would observe that he had not called it "*Café de Château*," nor "*Café de Fontonelles*," — the gold of California would not induce him. Why did he remain there? Naturally, to

goad them! It was a principle, one understood. To *goad* them and hold them in check! One kept a café, — why not? One had one's principles, — one's conviction, — that was another thing! That was the kind of "'air-pin" — was it not? — that *he*, Gustav Ribaud, was like!

Yet for all his truculent socialism, he was quick, obliging, and charmingly attentive to Dick and his needs. As to Dick's horse, he should have the best veterinary surgeon — there was an incomparable one in the person of the blacksmith — see to him, and if it were an affair of days, and Dick must go, he himself would be glad to purchase the beast, his saddle, and accoutrements. It was an affair of business, — an advertisement for the café! He would ride the horse himself before the gates of the park. It would please his customers. Ha! he had learned a trick or two in free America.

Dick's first act had been to shave off his characteristic beard and mustache, and even to submit his long curls to the village barber's shears, while a straw hat, which he bought to take the place of his slouched sombrero, completed his transformation. His host saw in the change only the natural preparation of a voyager, but Dick had really made the sacrifice, not from fear of detection, for he had recovered his old swaggering audacity, but from a quick distaste he had taken to his resemblance to the portrait. He was too genuine a Westerner, and too vain a man, to feel flattered at his resemblance to an aristocratic bully, as he believed the ancestral De Fontonelles to be. Even his momentary sensation as he faced the curé in the picture gallery was more from a vague sense that liberties had been taken with his, Dick's, personality, than that he had borrowed anything from the portrait.

But he was not so clear about the young girl. Her tender, appealing voice, although he knew it had been addressed only to a vision, still thrilled his fancy. The

pluck that had made her withstand her fear so long — until he had uttered that dreadful word — still excited his admiration. His curiosity to know what mistake he had made — for he knew it must have been some frightful blunder — was all the more keen, as he had no chance to rectify it. What a brute she must have thought him — or *did* she really think him a brute even then? — for her look was one more of despair and pity! Yet she would remember him only by that last word, and never know that he had risked insult and ejection from her friends to carry her to her place of safety. He could not bear to go across the seas carrying the pale, unsatisfied face of that gentle girl ever before his eyes! A sense of delicacy — new to Dick, but always the accompaniment of deep feeling — kept him from even hinting his story to his host, though he knew — perhaps *because* he knew — that it would gratify his enmity to the family. A sudden thought struck Dick. He knew her house, and her name. He would write her a note. Somebody would be sure to translate it for her.

He borrowed pen, ink, and paper, and in the clean solitude of his fresh chintz bedroom indited the following letter: —

Dear Miss Fontonelles, — Please excuse me for having skeert you. I had n't any call to do it; I never reckoned to do it — it was all jest my derned luck; I only reckoned to tell you I was lost — in them blamed woods — don't you remember? — "lost" — *perdoo!* — and then you up and fainted! I would n't have come into your garden, only, you see, I 'd just skeered by accident two of your helps, reg'lar softies, and I wanted to explain. I reckon they allowed I was that man that that picture in the hall was painted after. I reckon they took *me* for him — see? But he ain't *my* style, nohow, and I never saw the picture at all until after I 'd toted you, when you

fainted, up to your house, or I 'd have made my kalkilations and acted according. I 'd have laid low in the woods, and got away without skeerin' you. You see what I mean? It was mighty mean of me, I suppose, to have tetched you at all, without saying, "Excuse me, miss," and toted you out of the garden and up the steps into your own parlor without asking your leave. But the whole thing tumbled so suddent. And it did n't seem the square thing for me to lite out and leave you lying there on the grass. That 's why! I 'm sorry I skeert that old preacher, but he came upon me in the picture hall so suddent, that it was a mighty close call, I tell you, to get off without a shindy. Please forgive me, Miss Fontonelles. When you get this, I shall be going back home to America, but you might write to me at Denver City, saying you 're all right. I liked your style; I liked your grit in standing up to me in the garden until you had your say, when you thought I was the Lord knows what — though I never understood a word you got off, not knowing French. But it 's all the same now. Say! I 've got your rose!

Yours very respectfully,

RICHARD FOUNTAINS.

Dick folded the epistle and put it in his pocket. He would post it himself on the morning before he left. When he came downstairs he found his indefatigable host awaiting him, with the report of the veterinary blacksmith. There was nothing seriously wrong with the mustang, but it would be unfit to travel for several days. The landlord repeated his former offer. Dick, whose money was pretty well exhausted, was fain to accept, reflecting that *she* had never seen the mustang and would not recognize it. But he drew the line at the sombrero, to which his host had taken a great fancy. He had worn it before *her!*

Later in the evening Dick was sitting on the low ve-

randa of the café, overlooking the white road. A round white table was beside him, his feet were on the railing, but his eyes were resting beyond on the high, mouldy iron gates of the mysterious park. What he was thinking of did not matter, but he was a little impatient at the sudden appearance of his host — whom he had evaded during the afternoon — at his side. The man's manner was full of bursting loquacity and mysterious levity.

Truly, it was a good hour when Dick had arrived at Fontonelles, — "just in time." He could see now what a world of imbeciles was France. What stupid ignorance ruled, what low cunning and low tact could achieve, — in effect, what jugglers and mountebanks, hypocritical priests, and licentious and lying noblesse went to make up existing society. Ah, there had been a fine excitement, a regular *coup de théâtre* at Fontonelles, — the château yonder; here at the village, where the news was brought by frightened grooms and silly women! He had been in the thick of it all the afternoon! He had examined it, — interrogated them like a *juge d'instruction*, — winnowed it, sifted it. And what was it all? An attempt by these wretched priests and noblesse to revive in the nineteenth century — the age of electricity and Pullman cars — a miserable mediæval legend of an apparition, a miracle! Yes, one is asked to believe that at the château yonder was seen last night three times the apparition of Armand de Fontonelles!

Dick started. "Armand de Fontonelles!" He remembered that she had repeated that name.

"Who's he?" he demanded abruptly.

"The first Comte de Fontonelles! When monsieur knows that the first comte has been dead three hundred years, he will see the imbecility of the affair!"

"Wot did he come back for?" growled Dick.

"Ah! it was a legend. Consider its artfulness! The Comte Armand had been a hard liver, a dissipated scoun-

drel, a reckless beast, but a mighty hunter of the stag. It was said that on one of these occasions he had been warned by the apparition of St. Hubert; but he had laughed, — for, observe, *he* always jeered at the priests too; hence this story! — and had declared that the flaming cross seen between the horns of the sacred stag was only the torch of a poacher, and he would shoot it! Good! the body of the comte, dead, but without a wound, was found in the wood the next day, with his discharged arquebus in his hand. The Archbishop of Rouen refused his body the rites of the Church until a number of masses were said every year and — paid for! One understands! one sees their 'little game;' the count now appears, — he is in purgatory! More masses, — more money! There you are. Bah! One understands, too, that the affair takes place, not in a café like this, — not in a public place, — but at a château of the noblesse, and is seen by" — the proprietor checked the characters on his fingers — "*two* retainers; one young demoiselle of the noblesse, daughter of the châtelaine herself; and, my faith, it goes without saying, by a fat priest, the curé! In effect, two interested ones! And the priest, his lie is magnificent! Superb! *For he saw the comte in the picture gallery, — in effect, stepping into his frame!*"

"Oh, come off the roof," said Dick impatiently; "they must have seen *something*, you know. The young lady would n't lie!"

Monsieur Ribaud leaned over, with a mysterious, cynical smile, and lowering his voice said: —

"You have reason to say so. You have hit it, my friend. There *was* a something! And if we regard the young lady, you shall hear. The story of Mademoiselle de Fontonelles is that she has walked by herself alone in the garden, — you observe, *alone*, — in the moonlight, near the edge of the wood. You comprehend? The mother and the curé are in the house, — for the time effaced! Here, at

the edge of the wood — though why she continues, a young demoiselle, to the edge of the wood does not make itself clear, — she beholds her ancestor, as on a pedestal, young, pale, but very handsome and *exalté*, — pardon!"

"Nothing," said Dick hurriedly; "go on!"

"She beseeches him why! He says he is lost! She faints away, on the instant, there — regard me! — *on the edge of the wood*, she says. But her mother and Monsieur le Curé find her pale, agitated, distressed, *on the sofa in the salon*. One is asked to believe that she is transported through the air — like an angel — by the spirit of Armand de Fontonelles. Incredible!"

"Well, wot do *you* think?" said Dick sharply.

The café proprietor looked around him carefully, and then lowered his voice significantly: —

"A lover!"

"A what?" said Dick, with a gasp.

"A lover!" repeated Ribaud. "You comprehend! Mademoiselle has no *dot*, — the property is nothing, — the brother has everything. A Mademoiselle de Fontonelles cannot marry out of her class, and the noblesse are all poor. Mademoiselle is young, — pretty, they say, of her kind. It is an intolerable life at the old château; mademoiselle consoles herself!"

Monsieur Ribaud never knew how near he was to the white road below the railing at that particular moment. Luckily, Dick controlled himself, and wisely, as Monsieur Ribaud's next sentence showed him.

"A romance, — an innocent, foolish liaison, if you like, — but, all the same, if known of a Mademoiselle de Fontonelles, a compromising, a fatal entanglement. There you are. Look! for this, then, all this story of cock and bulls and spirits! Mademoiselle has been discovered with her lover by some one. This pretty story shall stop their mouths!"

"But wot," said Dick brusquely, "wot if the girl was really skeert at something she 'd seen, and fainted dead away, as she said she did, — and — and" — he hesitated — "some stranger came along and picked her up?"

Monsieur Ribaud looked at him pityingly.

"A Mademoiselle de Fontonelle is picked up by her servants, by her family, but not by the young man in the woods, alone. It is even more compromising!"

"Do you mean to say," said Dick furiously, "that the ragpickers and sneaks that wade around in the slumgullion of this country would dare to spatter that young gal?"

"I mean to say, yes, — assuredly, positively yes!" said Ribaud, rubbing his hands with a certain satisfaction at Dick's fury. "For you comprehend not the position of *la jeune fille* in all France! Ah! in America the young lady she go everywhere alone; I have seen her — pretty, charming, fascinating — alone with the young man. But here, no, never! Regard me, my friend. The French mother, she say to her daughter's fiancé, 'Look! there is my daughter. She has never been alone with a young man for five minutes, — not even with you. Take her for your wife!' It is monstrous! it is impossible! it is so!"

There was a silence of a few minutes, and Dick looked blankly at the iron gates of the park of Fontonelles. Then he said: "Give me a cigar."

Monsieur Ribaud instantly produced his cigar case. Dick took a cigar, but waved aside the proffered match, and entering the café, took from his pocket the letter to Mademoiselle de Fontonelles, twisted it in a spiral, lighted it at a candle, lit his cigar with it, and returning to the veranda, held it in his hand until the last ashes dropped on the floor. Then he said gravely to Ribaud: —

"You 've treated me like a white man, Frenchy, and I ain't goin' back on yer — though your ways ain't my ways — nohow; but I reckon in this yer matter at the shotto

you 're a little too previous. For though I ain't as a gen'ral thing take stock in ghosts, I believe every word that them [illegible] told you. And" he added, laying his hand somewhat heavily on Ribaud's shoulder, "if you 're the man I take you for you'll believe it too! And if that that Armand de Fontonelle had n't 'a' picked up that gal at that moment he would have [illegible] to roast in hell another three hundred years! That's why I believe her story. So you let these yer Fontonelles keep their ghosts for all they 're worth; and when you next feel inclined to talk about that gal's bones, you'll think of me, and shut your head! You hear me, Frenchy, I'm shoutin'! And don't you forget it!"

Nevertheless, early the next morning Monsieur Ribaud accompanied his guest to the railway station, and parted from him with great effusion. On his way back an old-fashioned carriage with a postilion passed him. At a sign from its occupant, the postilion pulled up, and Monsieur Ribaud, bowing to the dust, approached the window, and the pale, stern face of a dignified, white-haired woman of sixty that looked from it.

"Has he gone?" said the lady.

"Assuredly, madame; I was with him at the station."

"And you think no one saw him?"

"No one, madame, but myself."

"And — what kind of a man was he?"

Monsieur Ribaud lifted his shoulders, threw out his hands despairingly, yet with a world of significance, and said: —

"An American."

"Ah!"

The carriage drove on and entered the gates of the château. And Monsieur Ribaud, café proprietor and Social Democrat, straightened himself in the dust and shook his fist after it.

"UNSER KARL"

THE American consul for Schlachtstadt had just turned out of the broad König's Allée into the little square that held his consulate. Its residences always seemed to him to wear that singularly uninhabited air peculiar to a street scene in a theatre. The façades, with their stiff, striped wooden awnings over the windows, were of the regularity, color, and pattern only seen on the stage, and conversation carried on in the street below always seemed to be invested with that perfect confidence and security which surrounds the actor in his painted desert of urban perspective. Yet it was a peaceful change to the other byways and highways of Schlachtstadt, which were always filled with an equally unreal and mechanical soldiery, who appeared to be daily taken out of their boxes of "caserne" or "dépôt" and loosely scattered all over the pretty linden-haunted German town. There were soldiers standing on street corners; soldiers staring woodenly into shop windows; soldiers halted suddenly into stone, like lizards, at the approach of Offiziere; Offiziere lounging stiffly four abreast, sweeping the pavement with their trailing sabres all at one angle. There were cavalcades of red hussars, cavalcades of blue hussars, cavalcades of Uhlans, with glittering lances and pennons, — with or without a band, — formally parading; there were straggling "fatigues" or "details" coming round the corners; there were dusty, businesslike columns of infantry, going nowhere and to no purpose. And they one and all seemed to be *wound up* — for that service — and apparently always in the same place. In the band of their caps — invariably of one pattern — was a button, in the centre of

which was a square opening or keyhole. The consul was always convinced that through this keyhole opening, by means of a key, the humblest caporal wound up his file, the Hauptmann controlled his lieutenants and non-commissioned officers, and even the general himself, wearing the same cap, was subject through his cap to a higher moving power. In the suburbs, when the supply of soldiers gave out, there were sentry-boxes; when these dropped off, there were "caissons," or commissary wagons. And, lest the military idea should ever fail from out the Schlachtstadt's burgher's mind, there were police in uniform, street-sweepers in uniform; the ticket-takers, guards, and sweepers at the Bahnhof were in uniform, — but all wearing the same kind of cap, with the probability of having been wound up freshly each morning for their daily work. Even the postman delivered peaceful invoices to the consul with his side-arms and the air of bringing dispatches from the field of battle; and the consul saluted, and felt for a few moments the whole weight of his consular responsibility.

Yet, in spite of this military precedence, it did not seem in the least inconsistent with the decidedly peaceful character of the town, and this again suggested its utter unreality; wandering cows sometimes got mixed up with squadrons of cavalry, and did not seem to mind it; sheep passed singly between files of infantry, or preceded them in a flock when on the march; indeed, nothing could be more delightful and innocent than to see a regiment of infantry in heavy marching order, laden with every conceivable thing they could want for a week, returning after a cheerful search for an invisible enemy in the suburbs, to bivouac peacefully among the cabbages in the market-place. Nobody was ever imposed upon for a moment by their tremendous energy and severe display; drums might beat, trumpets blow, dragoons charge furiously all over the Exercier Platz, or suddenly flash their naked swords in the streets to the guttural com-

mand of an officer, — nobody seemed to mind it. People glanced up to recognize Rudolf or Max "doing their service," nodded, and went about their business. And although the officers always wore their side-arms, and at the most peaceful of social dinners only relinquished their swords in the hall, apparently that they might be ready to buckle them on again and rush out to do battle for the Fatherland between the courses, the other guests only looked upon these weapons in the light of sticks and umbrellas, and possessed their souls in peace. And when, added to this singular incongruity, many of these warriors were spectacled, studious men, and, despite their lethal weapons, wore a slightly professional air, and were — to a man — deeply sentimental and singularly simple, their attitude in this eternal Kriegsspiel seemed to the consul more puzzling than ever.

As he entered his consulate he was confronted with another aspect of Schlachtstadt quite as wonderful, yet already familiar to him. For, in spite of these "alarums without," which, however, never seemed to penetrate beyond the town itself, Schlachtstadt and its suburbs were known all over the world for the manufacture of certain beautiful textile fabrics, and many of the rank and file of those warriors had built up the fame and prosperity of the district over their peaceful looms in wayside cottages. There were great dépôts and counting-houses, larger than even the cavalry barracks, where no other uniform but that of the postman was known. Hence it was that the consul's chief duty was to uphold the flag of his own country by the examination and certification of divers invoices sent to his office by the manufacturers. But, oddly enough, these business messengers were chiefly women, — not clerks, but ordinary household servants, and, on busy days, the consulate might have been mistaken for a female registry office, so filled and possessed it was by waiting Mädchen. Here it was that Gretchen, Lieschen, and Clärchen, in the cleanest of blue gowns, and stoutly but

who commanded the 20th Division, and it further chanced that the same Adlerkreutz was as gallant a soldier as ever cried "Vorwärts!" at the head of his men, as profound a military strategist and organizer as ever carried his own and his enemy's plans in his iron head and spiked helmet, and yet with as simple and unaffected a soul breathing under his gray mustache as ever issued from the lips of a child. So this grim but gentle veteran had arranged with the consul that in cases where the presumption of nationality was strong, although the evidence was not present, he would take the consul's parole for the appearance of the "deserter" or his papers, without the aid of prolonged diplomacy. In this way the consul had saved to Milwaukee a worthy but imprudent brewer, and to New York an excellent sausage butcher and possible alderman; but had returned to martial duty one or two tramps or journeymen who had never seen America except from the decks of the ships in which they were "stowaways," and on which they were returned, — and thus the temper and peace of two great nations were preserved.

"He says," said the inspector severely, "that he is an American citizen, but has lost his naturalization papers. Yet he has made the damaging admission to others that he lived several years in Rome! And," continued the inspector, looking over his shoulder at the closed door as he placed his finger beside his nose, "he says he has relations living at Palmyra, whom he frequently visited. Ach! Observe this unheard-of-and-not-to-be-trusted statement!"

The consul, however, smiled with a slight flash of intelligence. "Let me see him," he said.

They passed into the outer office; another policeman and a corporal of infantry saluted and rose. In the centre of an admiring and sympathetic crowd of Dienstmädchen sat the culprit, the least concerned of the party; a stripling — a boy — scarcely out of his teens! Indeed, it was impos-

sible to conceive of a more innocent, bucolic, and almost angelic looking derelict. With a skin that had the peculiar white and rosiness of fresh pork, he had blue eyes, celestially wide open and staring, and the thick flocculent yellow curls of the sun god! He might have been an overgrown and badly dressed Cupid, who had innocently wandered from Paphian shores. He smiled as the consul entered, and wiped from his full red lips with the back of his hand the traces of a sausage he was eating. The consul recognized the flavor at once, — he had smelled it before in Lieschen's little hand-basket.

"You say you lived at Rome?" began the consul pleasantly. "Did you take out your first declaration of your intention of becoming an American citizen there?"

The inspector cast an approving glance at the consul, fixed a stern eye on the cherubic prisoner, and leaned back in his chair to hear the reply to this terrible question.

"I don't remember," said the culprit, knitting his brows in infantine thought. "It was either there, or at Madrid or Syracuse."

The inspector was about to rise; this was really trifling with the dignity of the municipality. But the consul laid his hand on the official's sleeve, and, opening an American atlas to a map of the State of New York, said to the prisoner, as he placed the inspector's hand on the sheet, "I see you know the names of the *towns* on the Erie and New York Central Railroad. But" —

"I can tell you the number of people in each town and what are the manufactures," interrupted the young fellow, with youthful vanity. "Madrid has six thousand, and there are over sixty thousand in" —

"That will do," said the consul, as a murmur of Wunderschön! went round the group of listening servant girls, while glances of admiration were shot at the beaming accused. "But you ought to remember the name of the

town where your naturalization papers were afterwards sent."

"But I was a citizen from the moment I made my declaration," said the stranger, smiling and looking triumphantly at his admirers, "and I could vote!"

The inspector, since he had come to grief over American geographical nomenclature, was grimly taciturn. The consul, however, was by no means certain of his victory. His alleged fellow citizen was too encyclopædic in his knowledge: a clever youth might have crammed for this with a text-book, but then he did not *look* at all clever; indeed, he had rather the stupidity of the mythological subject he represented. "Leave him with me," said the consul. The inspector handed him a *précis* of the case. The cherub's name was Karl Schwartz, an orphan, missing from Schlachtstadt since the age of twelve. Relations not living, or in emigration. Identity established by prisoner's admission and record.

"Now, Karl," said the consul cheerfully, as the door of his private office closed upon them, "what is your little game? Have you *ever* had any papers? And if you were clever enough to study the map of New York State, why were n't you clever enough to see that it would n't stand you in place of your papers?"

"Dot 's joost it," said Karl in English; "but you see dot if I haf declairet mine intention of begomming a citizen, it 's all the same, don't it?"

"By no means, for you seem to have no evidence of the *declaration;* no papers at all."

"Zo!" said Karl. Nevertheless, he pushed his small, rosy, pickled-pig's-feet of fingers through his fleecy curls and beamed pleasantly at the consul. "Dot 's vot 's der matter," he said, as if taking a kindly interest in some private trouble of the consul's. "Dot 's vere you vos, eh?"

The consul looked steadily at him for a moment. Such

stupidity was by no means phenomenal, nor at all inconsistent with his appearance. "And," continued the consul gravely, "I must tell you that, unless you have other proofs than you have shown, it will be my duty to give you up to the authorities."

"Dot means I shall serve my time, eh?" said Karl, with an unchanged smile.

"Exactly so," returned the consul.

"Zo!" said Karl. "Dese town — dese Schlachtstadt — is fine town, eh? Fine vomens. Goot men. Und beer und sausage. Blenty to eat and drink, eh? Und," looking around the room, "you and te poys haf a gay times."

"Yes," said the consul shortly, turning away. But he presently faced round again on the unfettered Karl, who was evidently indulging in a gormandizing reverie.

"What on earth brought you here, anyway?"

"Was ist das?"

"What brought you here from America, or wherever you ran away from?"

"To see der volks."

"But you are an *orphan*, you know, and you have no folks living here."

"But all Shermany is mine volks, — de whole gountry, don't it? Pet your poots! How 's dot, eh?"

The consul turned back to his desk and wrote a short note to General Adlerkreutz in his own American German. He did not think it his duty in the present case to interfere with the authorities, or to offer his parole for Karl Schwartz. But he would claim that, as the offender was evidently an innocent emigrant and still young, any punishment or military degradation be omitted, and he be allowed to take his place like any other recruit in the ranks. If he might have the temerity to the undoubted, far-seeing military authority of suggestion making here, he would suggest that Karl was for the commissariat fitted! Of course, he

still retained the right, on production of satisfactory proof, his discharge to claim.

The consul read this aloud to Karl. The cherubic youth smiled and said, "Zo!" Then, extending his hand, he added the word "Zshake!"

The consul shook his hand a little remorsefully, and, preceding him to the outer room, resigned him with the note into the inspector's hands. A universal sigh went up from the girls, and glances of appeal sought the consul; but he wisely concluded that it would be well, for a while, that Karl — a helpless orphan — should be under some sort of discipline! And the securer business of certifying invoices recommenced.

Late that afternoon he received a folded bit of blue paper from the waist-belt of an orderly, which contained in English characters and as a single word "Alright," followed by certain jagged pen-marks, which he recognized as Adlerkreutz's signature. But it was not until a week later that he learned anything definite. He was returning one night to his lodgings in the residential part of the city, and, in opening the door with his pass-key, perceived in the rear of the hall his handmaiden Trudschen, attended by the usual blue or yellow or red shadow. He was passing by them with the local *'n' Abend!* on his lips when the soldier turned his face and saluted. The consul stopped. It was the cherub Karl in uniform.

But it had not subdued a single one of his characteristics. His hair had been cropped a little more closely under his cap, but there was its color and woolliness still intact; his plump figure was girt by belt and buttons, but he only looked the more unreal, and more like a combination of pen-wiper and pincushion, until his puffy breast and shoulders seemed to offer a positive invitation to any one who had picked up a pin. But, wonderful! — according to his brief story, — he had been so proficient in the goose

Karl came on

As he neared his house he was a little surprised to find the windows of his sitting-room lit up, and that there were no signs of Trudschen in the lower hall or passages. He made his way upstairs in the dark and pushed open the door of his apartment. To his astonishment, Karl was sitting comfortably in his own chair, his cap off before a student-lamp on the table, deeply engaged in apparent study. So profound was his abstraction that it was a moment before he looked up, and the consul had a good look at his usually beaming and responsive face, which, however, now struck him as wearing a singular air of thought and concentration. When their eyes at last met, he rose instantly and saluted, and his beaming smile returned. But either from his natural phlegm or extraordinary self-control, he betrayed neither embarrassment nor alarm.

The explanation he gave was direct and simple. Trudschen had gone out with the Corporal Fritz for a short walk, and had asked him to "keep house" during their absence. He had no books, no papers, nothing to read in the barracks, and no chance to improve his mind. He thought the Herr Consul would not object to his looking at his books. The consul was touched; it was really a trivial indiscretion, and as much Trudschen's fault as Karl's! And if the poor fellow had any mind to improve, — his recent attitude certainly suggested thought and reflection, — the consul were a brute to reprove him. He smiled pleasantly as Karl returned a stubby bit of pencil and some greasy memoranda to his breast pocket, and glanced at the table. But to his surprise it was a large map that Karl had been studying, and, to his still greater surprise, a map of the consul's own district.

"You seem to be fond of map-studying," said the consul pleasantly. "You are not thinking of emigrating again?"

"Ach, no!" said Karl simply; "it is my cousine vot haf lif near here. I find her."

But he left on Trudschen's return, and the consul was surprised to see that, while Karl's attitude towards her had not changed, the girl exhibited less effusiveness than before. Believing it to be partly the effect of the return of the corporal, the consul taxed her with faithlessness. But Trudschen looked grave.

"Ah! He has new friends, this Karl of ours. He cares no more for poor girls like us. When fine ladies like the old Frau von Wimpfel make much of him, what will you?"

It appeared, indeed, from Trudschen's account, that the widow of a wealthy shopkeeper had made a kind of protégé of the young soldier, and given him presents. Furthermore, that the wife of his colonel had employed him to act as page or attendant at an afternoon Gesellschaft, and that since then the wives of other officers had sought him. Did not the Herr Consul think it was dreadful that this American, who could vote and make laws, should be subjected to such things?

The consul did not know what to think. It seemed to him, however, that Karl was "getting on," and that he was not in need of his assistance. It was in the expectation of hearing more about him, however, that he cheerfully accepted an invitation from Adlerkreutz to dine at the Caserne one evening with the staff. Here he found, somewhat to his embarrassment, that the dinner was partly in his own honor, and at the close of five courses, and the emptying of many bottles, his health was proposed by the gallant veteran Adlerkreutz in a neat address of many syllables containing all the parts of speech and a single verb. It was to the effect that in his soul-friend the Herr Consul and himself was the never-to-be-severed union of Germania and Columbia, and in their perfect understanding was the war-defying alliance of two great nations, and that in the consul's noble restoration of Unser Karl to the German army there was the astute diplomacy of a great mind. He was satisfied that

himself and the Herr Consul still united in the great future, looking down upon a common brotherhood, — the great Germanic-American Confederation, — would feel satisfied with themselves and each other and their never-to-be-forgotten earth-labors. Cries of "Hoch! Hoch!" resounded through the apartment with the grinding roll of heavy-bottomed beer-glasses, and the consul, tremulous with emotion and a reserve verb in his pocket, rose to reply. Fully embarked upon this perilous voyage, and steering wide and clear of any treacherous shore of intelligence or fancied harbor of understanding and rest, he kept boldly out at sea. He said that, while his loving adversary in this battle of compliment had disarmed him and left him no words to reply to his generous panegyric, he could not but join with that gallant soldier in his heartfelt aspirations for the peaceful alliance of both countries. But while he fully reciprocated all his host's broader and higher sentiments, he must point out to this gallant assembly, this glorious brotherhood, that even a greater tie of sympathy knitted him to the general, — the tie of kinship! For while it was well known to the present company that their gallant commander had married an Englishwoman, he, the consul, although always an American, would now for the first time confess to them that he *himself* was of Dutch descent on his mother's side! He would say no more, but confidently leave them in possession of the tremendous significance of this until-then-unknown fact! He sat down, with the forgotten verb still in his pocket, but the applause that followed this perfectly conclusive, satisfying, and logical climax convinced him of his success. His hand was grasped eagerly by successive warriors; the general turned and embraced him before the breathless assembly; there were tears in the consul's eyes.

As the festivities progressed, however, he found to his surprise that Karl had not only become the fashion as a military page, but that his naïve stupidity and sublime sim-

plicity were the wondering theme and inexhaustible delight of the whole barracks. Stories were told of his genius for bewildering which ruled Handy Andy's: old stories of famous ignorance were rearranged and fitted to "our Karl." It was "our Karl" who, in receiving a tip of two marks from the hands of a young lady to whom he had brought the bouquet of a gallant lieutenant, exhibited some hesitation, and finally said, "Yes, but, gnädiges Fräulein, that cost us nine marks!" It was "our Karl" who, interrupting the regrets of another lady that she was unable to accept his master's invitation, said politely, "Ah! what matter. Gnädigste? I have still a letter for Fräulein Kupp [her maid], and I will tell that I must not invite you both." It was "our Karl" who astonished the hostess to whom he was sent at the last moment with apologies from an officer, unexpectedly detained at barrack duty, by suggesting that he should bring that unfortunate officer his dinner from the just served table. Nor were these charming infelicities confined to his social and domestic service. Although ready, mechanical, and invariably docile in the manual and physical duties of a soldier, — which endeared him to the German drill-master, — he was still lamentably ignorant as to its purport, to even the meaning and structure of the military instruments he handled or humanly looked upon. It was "our Karl" who suggested to his instructors that in field-firing it was quicker and easier to load his musket to the muzzle at once, and get rid of its death-dealing contents at a single discharge, than to load and fire consecutively. It was "our Karl" who nearly killed the instructor at sentry drill by adhering to the letter of his instructions when that instructor had forgotten the password. It was the same Karl who, severely admonished for his recklessness, the next time added to his challenge the precaution, "Unless you instantly say 'Fatherland' I 'll fire!" Yet his perfect good humor and childlike curiosity were unmistakable

throughout, and incited his comrades and his superiors to show him everything in the hope of getting some characteristic comment from him. Everything and everybody were open to Karl and his good-humored simplicity.

That evening, as the general accompanied the consul down to the gateway and the waiting carriage, a figure in uniform ran spontaneously before them and shouted "Heraus!" to the sentries. But the general promptly checked "the turning out" of the guard with a paternal shake of his finger to the over-zealous soldier, in whom the consul recognized Karl. "He is my Bursche now," said the general explanatorily. "My wife has taken a fancy to him. Ach! he is very popular with these women." The consul was still more surprised. The Frau Generalin Adlerkreutz he knew to be a pronounced Englishwoman, — carrying out her English ways, proprieties, and prejudices in the very heart of Schlachtstadt, uncompromisingly, without fear and without reproach. That she should follow a merely foreign society craze, or alter her English household so as to admit the impossible Karl, struck him oddly.

A month or two elapsed without further news of Karl, when one afternoon he suddenly turned up at the consulate. He had again sought the consular quiet to write a few letters home; he had no chance in the confinement of the barracks.

"But by this time you must be in the family of a field-marshal, at least," suggested the consul pleasantly.

"Not to-day, but next week," said Karl, with sublime simplicity; "*then* I am going to serve with the governor commandant of Rheinfestung."

The consul smiled, motioned him to a seat at a table in the outer office, and left him undisturbed to his correspondence.

Returning later, he found Karl, his letters finished, gazing with childish curiosity and admiration at some thick

official envelopes, bearing the stamp of the consulate, which were lying on the table. He was evidently struck with the contrast between them and the thin, flimsy affairs he was holding in his hand. He appeared still more impressed when the consul told him what they were.

"Are you writing to your friends?" continued the consul, touched by his simplicity.

"Ach ja!" said Karl eagerly.

"Would you like to put your letter in one of these envelopes?" continued the official.

The beaming face and eyes of Karl were a sufficient answer. After all, it was a small favor granted to this odd waif, who seemed to still cling to the consular protection. He handed him the envelope and left him addressing it in boyish pride.

It was Karl's last visit to the consulate. He appeared to have spoken truly, and the consul presently learned that he had indeed been transferred, through some high official manipulation, to the personal service of the governor of Rheinfestung. There was weeping among the Dienstmädchen of Schlachtstadt, and a distinct loss of originality and lightness in the gatherings of the gentler Hausfrauen. His memory still survived in the barracks through the later editions of his former delightful stupidities, — many of them, it is to be feared, were inventions, — and stories that were supposed to have come from Rheinfestung were described in the slang of the Offiziere as being "colossal." But the consul remembered Rheinfestung, and could not imagine it as a home for Karl, or in any way fostering his peculiar qualities. For it was eminently a fortress of fortresses, a magazine of magazines, a dépôt of dépôts. It was the key of the Rhine, the citadel of Westphalia, the "Clapham Junction" of German railways, but defended, fortified, encompassed, and controlled by the newest as well as the oldest devices of military strategy and science. Even in

the pipingest time of peace, whole railway trains went into it like a rat in a trap, and might have never come out of it; it stretched out an inviting hand and arm across the river that might in the twinkling of an eye be changed into a closed fist of menace. You "defiled" into it, commanded at every step by enfilading walls; you "debouched" out of it, as you thought, and found yourself only before the walls; you "reëntered" it at every possible angle; you did everything, apparently, but pass through it. You thought yourself well out of it, and were stopped by a bastion. Its circumvallations haunted you until you came to the next station. It had pressed even the current of the river into its defensive service. There were secrets of its foundations and mines that only the highest military despots knew and kept to themselves. In a word — it was impregnable.

That such a place could not be trifled with or misunderstood in its right-and-acute-angled severities seemed plain to every one. But set on by his companions, who were showing him its defensive foundations, or in his own idle curiosity, Karl managed to fall into the Rhine and was fished out with difficulty. The immersion may have chilled his military ardor or soured his good humor, for later the consul heard that he had visited the American consular agent at an adjacent town with the old story of his American citizenship. "He seemed," said the consul's colleague, "to be well posted about American railways and American towns, but he had no papers. He lounged around the office for a while and" —

"Wrote letters home?" suggested the consul, with a flash of reminiscence.

"Yes, the poor chap had no privacy at the barracks, and I reckon was overlooked or bedeviled."

This was the last the consul heard of Karl Schwartz directly; for a week or two later he again fell into the Rhine, this time so fatally and effectually that in spite of

the efforts of his companions he was swept away by the rapid current, and thus ended his service to his country. His body was never recovered.

A few months before the consul was transferred from Schlachtstadt to another post, his memory of the departed Karl was revived by a visit from Adlerkreutz. The general looked grave.

"You remember Unser Karl?" he said.

"Yes."

"Do you think he was an impostor?"

"As regards his American citizenship, yes! But I could not say more."

"Zo!" said the general. "A very singular thing has happened," he added, twirling his mustache. "The inspector of police has notified us of the arrival of a Karl Schwartz in this town. It appears he is the *real* Karl Schwartz, identified by his sister as the only one. The other, who was drowned, was an impostor. Hein?"

"Then you have secured another recruit?" said the consul smilingly.

"No. For this one has already served his time in Elsass, where he went when he left here as a boy. But, Donnerwetter, why should that dumb fool take his name?"

"By chance, I fancy. Then he stupidly stuck to it, and had to take the responsibilities with it. Don't you see?" said the consul, pleased with his own cleverness.

"Zo—o!" said the general slowly, in his deepest voice. But the German exclamation has a variety of significance, according to the inflection, and Adlerkreutz's ejaculation seemed to contain them all.

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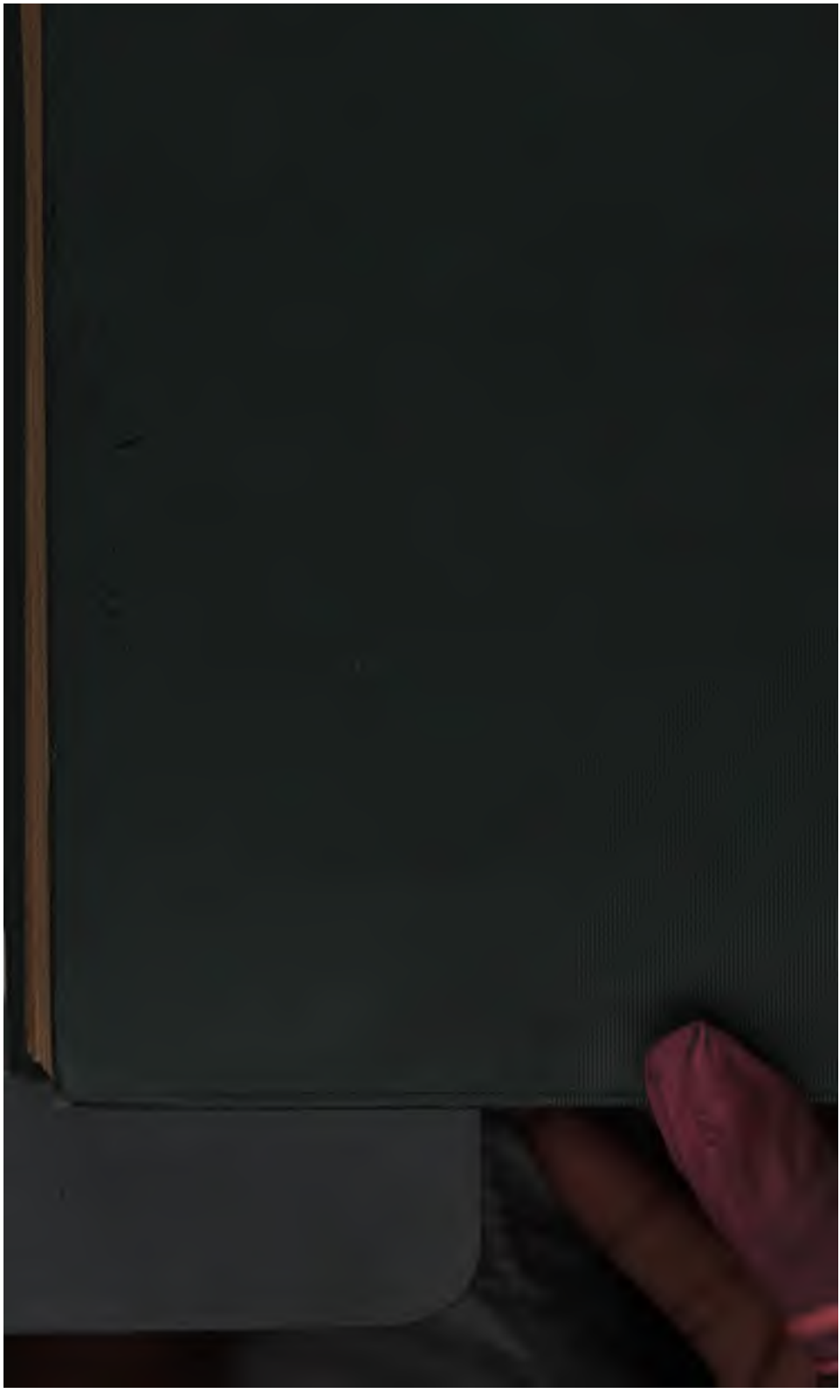
It was in Paris, where the consul had lingered on his way to his new post. He was sitting in a well-known café, among whose habitués were several military officers of high rank. A group of them were gathered round a table